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Headquarters:

THE DICKENS HOUSE
48 DOUGHTY STREET, LONDON, W.C. 1
Telephone: Holborn 9363

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Drawn by] [*Ruth Whittaker*

A Sign of the Times. Dr. Rosenbach paid $13,500 for a copy of Dante's "Divine Comedy" at the Cortlandt Bishop sale in New York in April, but the heading to the paragraph announcing this in the staid "Times," gave precedence to other important items and boldly announced "£6,000 paid for 10 Dickens Copies."

* * * * *

The Reading Editions. These were the reading editions prepared by Dickens for his own use. These books are of the utmost importance as they represent the only correct versions of the readings as given by Dickens; the margins are full of additions to the printed text, and directions for reading. They were the actual books he took with him on to the platform, but to which he very seldom referred. They were destined for the Forster collection, and should never have been disposed of if Dickens's wishes as expressed in a letter to Charles Kent dated 26th March, 1870, and published in the Letters (1880) had been respected. But six of them were sold in 1870, fetching from £12 10s. to £25 each. In April last four of these same little volumes fetched $12,825 or about £2,600. Five others realised no less than $16,700 (£3,370), and one, a privately printed copy of *Mrs. Lirriper* without any annotations, $425. *A Christmas Carol* realised $5,000. *Sikes and Nancy* and *The Chimes*, bound in one volume, fetched $7,500. All except two of the readings have been purchased by American collectors, but *Little Dombey* and *The Bastille Prisoner*—the reading prepared by Dickens but never delivered—have come to Europe for the library of Count de Suzannet, which already contains the original readings of *Bardell and Pickwick*, *Mr. Chops the Dwarf*, *Bob Sawyer's Party*, and *Nicholas Nickleby*.

Carlyle's "Carol." A most important copy of the *Carol* was sold at Sothebys in April for £600. It bore the inscription, "Thomas Carlyle, from his friend Charles Dickens. Eighteenth December, 1843," and then this second inscription made only a few days later, "Read with satisfaction; presented with satisfaction, and many Christmas wishes, to John Welsh, this 22nd. Decr. 1843, by T. Carlyle." Messrs. Quaritch were the purchasers.

* * * * *

Marley Alive. (Miss) M. M. Lloyd, writing to "The Daily Telegraph" on the 25th March, provided an interesting account of the origin of the name Marley. Her grandfather was Dr. Marley, of Cork Street, London, W. He was an Irishman, and one St. Patrick's Day gave a dinner party at which Dickens was a guest. During dinner the subject of strange surnames came up, and Dr. Marley said he thought his name was a most uncommon one, whereupon Dickens said, "Your name shall be a household word before the year is out."

We have not come across the name of Dr. Marley in any of Dickens's correspondence, but we record this letter as one of great interest on which further light may be shed at a later date.

* * * * *

Honour for Mr. J. W. T. Ley. Our old friend Mr. J. W. T. Ley has been elected Vice-President of the National Union of Journalists, the largest organisation of journalists in the world, with a membership of nearly seven thousand. Mr. Ley's early work for the Fellowship (he was Hon. Secretary 1904-9) and his close association with this magazine, need no mention here. He has been an active member of the National Union of Journalists for thirty years, twice President of the South Wales Branch—one of the biggest in the Union—and Secretary of the Southern and South-Western District Council since its formation in 1924. He has been a member of the Education Committee of the Union since its formation in 1924, and for the last two years its Chairman. By his own efforts he has raised several hundreds of pounds for the Union Benevolent Funds. His election as Vice-President was unopposed. The Presidency which may be assumed to follow in 1939 is the greatest honour open to a working journalist, and we offer to Mr. Ley our heartiest congratulations.

* * * * *

The "Nickleby" Centenary. Although not officially celebrated by the Fellowship, the public at large has not been left in doubt of the fact that one hundred years ago Dickens visited Yorkshire for the background of the story to follow *Pickwick*, as newspaper paragraphs and articles testify. In addition, we hear that in Essex a company of professional and amateur actors have marked the Centenary by touring the district with a three-act version of the novel. They are known as the St. Roger's Folk. The play was called "The Nicklebys," and although this company has produced many plays from Dickens during the twenty years of its existence, none has

been more popular. I have to thank a reader for an account of the production. Great care appears to have been taken to avoid any trace of caricature, and, so we are informed, great surprise was expressed that a Dickens play could look so beautiful. This is excellent news. What only is lacking is that the Fellowship has no branch in the Chelmsford-Colchester district where this clever company performs.

* * * * *

Broadstairs Dickens Festival. Such was the success of last year's Dickens Day at Broadstairs, that an official three days' festival is to be held on 22nd, 23rd, and 24th July. We hope many of our readers will be spending a holiday at Dickens's favourite seaside resort at about this time. Full particulars of the Festival can be obtained from Mr. J. B. Reed, Little Bathford, Lanthorne Road, Broadstairs.

* * * * *

Junior Branches. We are pleased to receive an excellent report of the work of the Junior Branch at Vancouver. Young Mr. Brant Ackroyd is following in his father's footsteps and is this year's president; the group numbers fifteen and is a most enthusiastic one. What interests us particularly is that those whose parents are not members of the main branch subscribe to *The Dickensian*. The best of good luck to you young Vancouverans.

* * * * *

Fact and Fiction. It is not often that a publisher sends to *The Dickensian* a book not directly associated with Dickens, but Messrs. Routledge have sent us a copy of "The Winsome Wench," and we are pleased to record it, not only because its author, Mr. Thomas Burke, is a Dickensian, but its subject is one that must readily appeal to all readers of Dickens. "The Winsome Wench" is neither Dolly Varden nor Bella Wilfer, but the sign of a coaching inn in the heart of the city. We follow the fortune of the Woden family through three generations, from the heyday of the inn in 1825 until its decline on the approach of the motor, and its subsequent tragic end at the opening of the twentieth century.

As an historical novel of a new type, "The Winsome Wench" will be hard to beat for sheer mastery of the atmosphere in which it is told.

* * * * *

Fiction and Fact. Weathercock-Wainewright was a man of many parts—artist, essayist, critic, and triple murderer. The Wainewright poisonings attracted Dickens to such a degree that from Janus Weathercock (the pseudonym for Wainewright's contributions to the "London Magazine," 1820-23) he took the name Jonas for the criminal in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and moulded the character of Julius Slinkton for the story *Hunted Down* hastily written for an American magazine. In Mr. Jonathan Curling's entertaining exposition of the life and character of Thomas Griffiths Wainewright we have a remarkable study of the curious perversion that turned a clever artist into an unrepentant criminal that has always attracted the writer of fiction. In addition to Dickens's use of Wainewright, Lytton based

his novel "Lucretis" on Janus, and Marcus Clarke was indebted to him for that remarkable story, "For the Term of his Natural Life." In 1932 Mr. Ladbroke Black wrote his novel, "Prince of Poisoners," also on the same incidents. One chapter of Mr. Curling's book is devoted to "As Dickens saw him," and many of the Dickens circle are encountered in its pages. Altogether an authoratitive book on an absorbing subject of the greatest interest to Dickensians.

* * * * *

Temperance? Dickens's views on temperance and teetotalism are well known, and I hope that those responsible for the convivial activities of Branches have read, marked, learned, and thoroughly digested his remarks on the subject, printed on page 122 of the Spring Number of this magazine.

From one of our oldest overseas branches I have received a report of their birthday celebrations in February last, at which the Lord Mayor of the city was present. I learn that in proposing the toast of the Immortal Memory, the speaker remarked that it "would be drunk in water, it being fitting that the purest of beverages should be used to pay tribute to the memory of the purest of English novelists." I cannot help saying that this sort of thing would not have commended itself to the great-hearted, broad-minded man whom the Fellowship honours. As good Dickensians, we cannot have any objection to anyone drinking this toast in the liquor that suits the individual taste of the drinker, whether it be water, tea, coffee, or any beverage whatsoever, but we deprecate total abstainers compelling everybody at any function to drink the toast in water, whether pure or not. In their zeal for the teetotal cause (for it must be remembered that they advocate not temperance or moderation, but entire abstinence) such people may often hold up the Fellowship to ridicule and may bring it into disrepute.

In parenthesis I wonder whether the so-called purest of beverages at the function in question was chlorinated, or distilled, or boiled, or even rain water, or whether it came from nature's own polluted sources whence it had to be filtered. Incidentally, the water used in the manufacture of alcoholic liquors is boiled in the process, and is therefore more pure than the natural article.

* * * * *

A Personal Experience. I have never told this story before, but the moment seems opportune. I was once invited to be the guest of the evening at a Branch celebration. It was called a "Swarry," but a footnote on the invitation informed me that alcohol was not permitted. On enquiry I was told that I might not even bring my own wine in which to drink the toast of the Immortal Memory that I was to propose. I therefore felt compelled to decline the invitation until such time as the "Swarry" could be held on premises more in keeping with the tavern at which Sam Weller dined with the Bath footmen on "boiled mutton with the usual trimmings."

WALTER DEXTER.

ALBERT SMITH, CHARLES DICKENS AND "CHRISTOPHER TADPOLE"

By A. E. BROOKES CROSS

I.

AMONG the half-forgotten authors of the early part of last century is Albert Smith. I have an early, but vivid, recollection of his being referred to by authority as an imitator of Dickens and of the subject being forthwith dismissed, Podsnappishly, as unworthy of further discussion.

Albert (Richard) Smith (1816—1860) was a man of unusual literary versatility, gifted with an overflowing fund of humour and great powers of observation. Although his life was short he published a score or so of volumes of miscellaneous character, including several novels, collections of essays and sketches and one or two books of travel—notably "The Ascent of Mont Blanc"—as well as writing or adapting plays and editing several journals; finally making a name for himself during the last decade of his life by his lecture-entertainments and travelogues (as we might call them nowadays) at the Egyptian Hall, London and elsewhere.

Seven of his eight novels were written between 1843 and 1849, the chief of which are "The Adventures of Mr. Ledbury" (1844), said by some critics to be his best, "The Scattergood Family" (1845), "The Pottleton Legacy" (1849), and the subject of this paper, "The Adventures of Christopher Tadpole" (1848).

In view of his various achievements it is surprising to hear occasional faint echoes of the superficial and limited observation referred to at the beginning of this article.

On recently re-reading "Christopher Tadpole" I was constrained to wonder whether the facile description "imitator" is entirely just, or whether it would not be nearer the truth to say that Charles Dickens and Albert Smith—the greater and the lesser—derived from a common source; that is, unconsciously adopted, each in his own fashion, the traditional style and technique of their predecessors in the newly-born art of the novel.

However, the following doggerel in the style of "A fine old English Gentleman" rewarded my efforts to trace the idea to its source. It is quoted with some relish by Edmund Yates, who, in his "Recollections," devotes much space to the accomplishments and personality of Albert Smith, with whom he was on intimate terms. It was written, says Yates, by a literary hack, employed by Madox, of the Princess's Theatre, London, with whom Smith had had some disagreement.

"The Fine Young English Dramatist

Albata Smith they've christened him, for wicked wags have said
That as 'Albata' now is used for silver plate instead,
So he has stolen the genuine wit that's found in Dickens' (sic) head
And for it substituted his own literary lead
Like a fine young English dramatist
All of the present time."

The only other written comment of this order that I have been able to trace is that of Mr. M. H. Spielmann, who, in his "History of Punch," writes: "He (Albert Smith) did not even succeed in escaping the quiet scorn of his occasional companion, Dickens, whose literary style he was trying to copy." We have it on the same authority that Albert Smith was unpopular when he was on the staff of "Punch" in his early days and that Douglas Jerrold for one did not regard him with favour; nevertheless, Dickens consulted him when arranging the memorial benefit on the occasion of Jerrold's death.

It is remarkable that no hint that his works were echoes of those of Dickens is to be found in any authoritative book of reference. A lengthy and highly-favourable appreciation appears in the D.N.B. in which this passage occurs: "As an author he showed exceptional versatility in turning to account his power of humourous observation."

Forster in "The Life of Charles Dickens" only refers to Albert Smith twice and then with almost calculated formality, thus: "His (Dickens's) proposed visit to London (1846) was to see the rehearsal of his Christmas Story (*The Battle of Life*) dramatised by Mr. Albert Smith for Mr. and Mrs. Keeley at the Lyceum." The other occasion is when, referring to Dickens's love of dogs, he speaks of "Linda, puppy of a Great St. Bernard brought over by Mr. Albert Smith." It seems evident, therefore, that there was some degree of friendship between the two authors. Further, Judge Talfourd was friend of both men and to Talfourd (said to be the original of Dickens's loving study of Tommy Traddles) Albert Smith dedicated "Christopher Tadpole" in these terms:—

> My dear Sir,
>
> The kind manner in which you have, more than once, spoken of my literary productions, has been I can assure you, my greatest encouragement during their progress. Not only on this account, however, but as a small mark of the respect and esteem I feel towards you and your amiable family—to whom I am in debt for so much that is agreeable. I beg therefore to dedicate this volume to you. And that its author may long enjoy the pleasure of your friendship is the sincere wish of
>
> Yours most faithfully,
>
> Albert Smith.

It may be pertinent to add here that Albert Smith had also adapted *The Cricket on the Hearth* for the Keeleys—whether with or without the concurrence of Dickens it is difficult to ascertain—and that his younger brother, Arthur, was entrusted by Dickens with the management of his first series of public readings, and the London ones of the second series; an engagement much valued by Dickens and only terminated by the early death of Arthur Smith.

A careful survey of all the available facts should be sufficient to qualify the impression that, although he may have tried to copy Dickens's literary style, Albert Smith was no more than a plagiarist—a type towards whom Dickens never disguised his wholesome and violent antipathy.

Doubtless Albert Smith was influenced to some extent by Dickens, as Dickens was by Smollett,* but that is a far different proposition from either being a conscious copyist. One does not speak of plagiarism in art but rather that the artist belongs to a particular period or group ; for example, to the Pre-Raphaelites, Impressionists or Cubists.

It is not to be denied that there are similarities in style, and structure, such as conducting a separate series of incidents in alternate chapters ; and in the use of irony and fun, or that Albert Smith was prone to the use of phrases dear to the heart of Dickens as " coming out strong," " getting up a part," but whether these and similar expressions were inventions or merely idioms of the day, as one should say to-day " doing himself well," is uncertain.

Other common features are the interpolation of stories—a fashion of the times particularly characteristic of Smollett—the use of quaint and grotesque metaphor, the sometimes exaggerated characterisation of the " comedy parts." There is a humorous, but genuine, sympathy with the lives of the humbler classes ; indeed, as with Dickens, the author in this aspect is more convincing than when writing of persons of high degree and their surroundings.

Whatever the truth may be, however, there is unquestionably both merit and originality in the novel " Christopher Tadpole " and its perusal provides a refreshing change from much current fiction.

II.

Now to examine the book itself, with a view to discovering what internal evidence it provides which may have given colour to a misconception, pausing to note any palpable resemblances in detail between the work of the two authors. At the same time bearing in mind that any comparison must be made with books of Dickens's earlier period, that is, prior to *Dombey and Son.*

The title " The Struggles and Adventures of Christopher Tadpole at Home and Abroad " immediately suggests an early Dickens novel, *e.g. The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby* or *The Adventures of Oliver Twist.* Here is a point for the advocates of the plagiarist school, but both writers were preceded by the author of " The Adventures of Roderick Random," etc., which renders the point invalid. Moreover, the first edition was issued in sixteen monthly parts and was illustrated by Leech—who, by the way, as well as Hablot K. Browne (Phiz) illustrated several other of Albert Smith's books.

The story is melodramatic to a degree, following the accepted lines of a theatrical plot as did the early novels of Dickens. The legitimate heir, born in secret of an aristocratic mother, little more than a child, who dies herself in childbirth, is abandoned and brought up obscurely among the salt mines of Cheshire. He escapes at the age of ten to be cared for by a group of mountebanks and becomes an acrobat ; finally, after many adventures and vicissitudes, achieving inheritance and happiness.

* *The Dickensian*, 1936, page 249.

There is nothing remarkable in such a story, which might have been conceived and used by Lytton or Marryat, and is typical of the story-telling of the period.

The book opens with a telling description of the quaint old city of Chester on a wild, dark evening in March. The following extract gives some idea of Albert Smith's descriptive style :—

> "The wind came in wonderful gusts, surging after one another like the waves of a mighty aerial sea : breaking into separate blasts as it struck against the sturdy, rugged edges of the towers that surrounded it, until each of them became a separate tempest on a small scale, and pervaded every street, without apparent regard to any particular point of the compass, turning signs upside down, roaring and brawling along the covered rows : and sparring right and left with what few lamps it encountered . . . for very wilfulness. Then rain would have come down if it could, but the wind would not give it a chance ; so it was obliged to be content with shooting down a few large drops between the squalls, and then being blown into a mist, was carried away against its will to the Welsh mountains, to sit up all night and form the fogs of the morning."

Then follows a description of the inn and, with the authentic Dickens touch, of the waiter, known as Bob, though that is not his name (see *Somebody's Luggage*, 1862). After the clandestine and premature birth of the hero, the clock moves on some ten years and we are present at the death in the salt mine of the abandoned lad's early guardian and its tragic consequences. This is a moving chapter and would be reminiscent of a similar scene in *Hard Times* if it had been written ten years later.

The story well launched, the scene is changed to London ; carriage parade on a May morning in Hyde Park, thence to a villa in Brompton Road, the dwelling of Lawyer Gudge, whose household circle comprises "Mrs. G.," "the hopeful infant" and the domestic drudge. The lawyer has an office in Clement's Inn and here we meet Sprouts the office boy—destined to play an important part in the story. Sprouts, the foolish, good-natured, under-fed lad of all or no work, who lived when in funds on hot baked potatoes from his friend the street vendor. Sprouts, who attempts to make himself spruce for a day's outing with his sweetheart by the addition of collar and cuffs cut from legal parchment and boots varnished with black sealing wax and string, might be said to be a full-length portrait of Sloppy in *Our Mutual Friend*, but he anticipated him by several years.

I am tempted to linger over these early scenes, but the book is teeming with such incidents and to do so would be tedious to the reader. Only the barest mention of some of the most characteristic episodes can therefore be made.

As with Dickens it is these humbler characters, office boys, milliners, baked potato merchants, show-people and so forth, whose weaknesses are their very virtues, who interest us most. There is, for example, Mr. Chirpy, "the jolly man," of Lambeth, proprietor of advertising vans of every description.

There were hats ten feet high, mounted on wheels; vast Hessian boots, the tassels of which could have swept the sills of first-floor windows; . . . there were coffee pots also, of shape and height that . . . might have been sent out as lighthouses to any foreign island, and shoes whose vast proportions rendered no longer apocryphial the story of the old woman, etc.

He offered the job of driver to Christopher in these words:—

"There's the Golden Canister hasn't got a driver just at present; or you might have had the Red Boot if you'd liked it better. I think the Chappo Fransay's the most comfortable though; that hat makes a perfect comfort in a storm, and saved the life of one of my drivers once, when he was blown over Waterloo Bridge in a gale of wind. It turned right up and he floated in it down to Queenhithe."

Mr. Chirpy explains that his brother makes fireworks for a living and:—

"He's been blow'd into the opposite first floor half a dozen times, as it is; and went up with a dozen packets of his own rockets last November, on very short notice."

Other scenes crowd to the memory: the outing to Hampton Court in a coal cart on Bank Holiday from the neighbourhood of Waterloo Road; the circus ring, the Penny Readings, Vauxhall Gardens by day and by night, Greenwich Fair, the tea-party at Gudge's office interrupted by the untimely arrival of the employer, the more important and amusing supper party in the newsagent's shop in Lambeth to which Professor Fandango (an early edition of Mr. Turveydrop in *Bleak House*) brought his pupils from his dancing academy. And the marriage of Sprouts, now the proud proprietor of Sprouts's Library, to Bessie the milliner's apprentice. The enjoyment of the simple pleasures and the blameless lives of these humble people are all in the true Dickens tradition and are the more enjoyable in that they are.

Nor must we forget on the fashionable side, the fête at Richmond and Mrs. Hamper, an impecunious parasite of the aristocracy who, rather than be left out of so select an assembly, travels overnight in "The Tagliony," that is, a ginger-beer wagon, free of charge and "gate-crashes" on the next day. Mrs. Hamper is as convincing as anything Dickens ever conceived and anticipates Lady Tippins (*Our Mutual Friend*) by sixteen years. Of course, there's a ladies' school at Hammersmith—(one seems to recall something of the kind in "Vanity Fair" published later in the same year or, what is more to the purpose, in *Edwin Drood* in 1870).

Though humour and comic scenes predominate, tragedy, squalor and pathos have their place in the narrative, as we have seen in the prelude. There is, for instance, the exciting night ride of Sir Frederick Arden (Christopher's actual father) culminating in his violent death during a tempest; the snowstorm and the lost travellers on the Great St. Bernard in the Alps—drawn from personal experience and, *inter alia*, the foul thieves' kitchen and lodging house at Liverpool recalling

Fagin's den with a precocious youth of the Artful Dodger type and a female receiver of stolen property.

Little need perhaps be said of the pseudo-aristocratic background or of the profligate group headed by young Arden, prototype of the titled youth of the Regency period, surrounded by his pugilistic cock-fighting and steeplechasing spongers, though mention may be made of the riotous medical students reminiscent of Albert Smith's own youthful environment.

In Gudge, we have the cunning blackmailing lawyer, a figure not unknown to the stage and the novel of this and subsequent periods. The character is more developed than that of Sampson Brass and has something of a Ralph Nickleby in his composition. On one occasion :—

> Mr. Gudge, finding nothing to vent his anger on, walked behind a woman who was carrying an infant with its head lolling over her shoulder, and made such fearful grimaces at the child, unknown to its mother that it got quite black in the face, with fits and thumps administered to its back, partly as a remedy and partly in chastisement.

It is impossible to avoid thinking of Quilp on this occasion, but for the origin of this particular pantomime antic we must go back to Grimaldi and beyond.

The following parallel is interesting :—

> Miss Twits (the milliner's friend) who had been disappointed in love . . . raised her eyes, and smiled with melancholy satisfaction at the glee of her young companions : and then she told them with a sigh that " they ought to enjoy themselves whilst they could —as she did once."
>
> " Why, Letty—you're not five and twenty," said Bessie.
>
> " Nay, dearest, not in years," replied Miss Twits, who read penny romances in bed, and believed in the blighted hearts of the minor theatres, " not in years "—she was particular about that —" but in trials—ah ! "
>
> And with a sigh she bent down her head, and impaled a mother-of-pearl button on her needle, and thought it an emblem of her heart.

Now read what Dickens wrote of Miss Mills in *David Copperfield* (1850) :—

> " That amiable, though quite used-up recluse : the little patriarch of something less than twenty, who had done with the world " and " who exhorted us from the pulpit of her own bitter youth . . . "

As a final resemblance, the Ardens and the Gudges made the Grand Tour and went to Venice as did the Dorrits some years later.

Yet who would have the temerity to whisper that Dickens borrowed from Albert Smith ?

In conclusion it may be said that this book is a trifle overcrowded and, judged by present standards, too long, a fact due largely to the

success it achieved during its periodical publication and consequent extension beyond the author's original intention.

III.

Sufficient has been outlined here to indicate the correspondence between the two novelists. Dickens himself was accused by some critics of his period for having borrowed from earlier authors. Read, for instance, from "The Satirist"* (1836) in respect of *The Pickwick Papers* and plagiarisms:—

> Will those wiseacres who find fault with our Boz's sketches after Sterne and Smollett tell us which of his pictures is not even more like *life*? And will they, moreover, be so good as to inform us who was a greater literary thief than Sterne himself?—whose pilfering propensities were not satisfied with stealing naked thoughts, of noble birth, but he must have their dress—the *words* identical—filching whole pages at a time. Who now cavils at the fame of Sheridan, though his impudence in theft was such that he robbed rough Churchill of his club to baste himself with in the character of "Sir Fretful Plagiary." The well-known passage where he says that "gentry of this class steal thoughts from others, and, as gypsies do children, disfigure them to make them pass for their own!" These are Churchill's very words.

With these words fresh in our minds, let us give, without cavil, the same measure of credit to Albert Smith for what he accomplished, remembering that he was junior to Dickens by four years and that he abandoned (except for one novel in 1860) novel writing before possibly his powers in that direction had reached maturity.

I am not concerned with the difference in quality between the two writers. We can recognize the gulf that separated them, one gifted with the spark of genius, without detracting from the work of the lesser, for in "Christopher Tadpole" (while admittedly there is some trash) there is a quantity and quality of observation second only to that possessed by Dickens himself and a wealth of material and characterisation which would not have shamed the greater writer. This work, overshadowed as it was by the profusion and richness of Dickens's imagination, is, in my opinion, worthy to stand, if not on the same shelf as the novels of Dickens, at least on the next below as a permanent representative of the best novels of its kind and period.

"THE GREAT INTERNATIONAL WALKING-MATCH"

This feature of Dickens's relaxation during his second American visit was celebrated by a dinner given by the Boston Branch on 8th February. The arrangements were in hands of Mr. Edward F. Payne (who represented Longfellow). Mr. F. W. C. Hersey was Dickens, and Mr. Harrison Crofford, George Dolby, Mr. Livingston Hunt Jr., James T. Fields. Other American friends of Dickens were also represented in costume and make-up—a really excellent celebration attracting a great amount of publicity.

* *The Dickensian*, 1936, page 284.

MR. MANTALINI SPEAKS

I am a demd villain. I will fill my pockets with change for a sovereign in halfpence and drown myself in the Thames ; but I will not be angry with her, even then, for I will put a note in the twopenny-post as I go along, to tell her where the body is. She will be a lovely widow. I shall be a body. Some handsome women will cry ; she will laugh demnebly.

* * * * *

She calls me cruel—me—me—me—who for her sake will become a demd, moist, unpleasant body.

* * * * *

Can I live to be mistrusted ? Have I cut my heart into a demd extraordinary number of little pieces and given them all away, one after another, to the same little engrossing demnition captivator, and can I live to be suspected by her ? Demmit, no, I cannot.

* * * * *

I am perpetually turning, like a demd old horse in a demnition mill. My life is one demd horrid grind.

* * * * *

False. Oh demn ! Now my soul, my gentle, captivating, bewitching and most demnebly slaving chick-a-biddy, be calm.

* * * * *

I will never break its heart, I will be a good boy, and never do so any more ; I will never be naughty again ; I beg its little pardon ; it is all up with its handsome friend. He has gone to the demnition bow-wows. It will have pity ? It will not scratch and claw, but pet and comfort ? Oh demmit.

* * * * *

A hundred guineas down will buy him ; mane, and crest, and legs, and tail, all of the demdest beauty. I will ride him in the park before the very chariots of the rejected countesses. The demd old dowager will faint with grief and rage : the other two will say, " He is married, he has made away with himself, it is a demd thing, it is all up ! " They will hate each other demnebly, and wish you dead and buried. Ha ! ha ! Demmit.

* * * * *

Not so very easy [to talk] when one is eating a demnition egg, for the yolk runs down the waistcoat, and yolk of egg does not match any waistcoat but a yellow waistcoat, demmit.

* * * * *

Do not put itself out of humour. It is a pretty, bewitching, little demd countenance, and it should not be out of humour, for it spoils its loveliness, and makes it cross and gloomy like a frightful, naughty, demd hobgoblin.

* * * * *

You will blame me, the world will blame me, the women will blame me ; everybody will laugh, and scoff, and smile, and grin most demnebly. They will say, " she had a blessing. She did not know it. He was too weak ; he was too good ; he was a demd fine fellow, but he loved too strong ; he could not bear her to be cross, and call him wicked names. It was a demd case, there never was a demder." But I forgive her.

TEN YEARS MARRIED

By LIZZIE WRAYBURN

SITTING by the fire, it was always a habit of mine to read pictures in the glowing coals. In those old days, though, it was often dreams of the future that I used to conjure up; now, after ten years of married life, my mind goes back to dwell on the pictures of the past.

Down there in the hollow by the flare I see Eugene, my dear husband, and myself, in those first few months of our life together. What a joy it was to feel how much he needed me, as his poor broken body gradually mended, and his mind began to get a grip on things once more. I suppose it came natural to me to devote myself to him, and even now, when he is as strong and healthy as ever before, he wants looking after—just like all other men—only it does not do to let them know it.

As his strength began to return and his old vigour of mind asserted itself, I did just begin to wonder whether he would fret at having cut himself off from his old circle of friends, but somehow I don't think he cared for them very much. In fact, he said to me one day with a twinkle in his eye, when I suggested something of the kind to him:

"My dear, you came to my rescue and saved me from our Tippins. When you and I married, she blotted me out for ever from her book of faithful admirers, for which thanks be."

I was glad not to have to mix with them; their ways were not our ways. Perhaps, though, a less courageous man than Eugene would have wanted to take up his life in a new country, but I am glad—yes, I am glad, that, in spite of all the difficulties of those early years, he showed that he was big enough to take his own course, no matter what his so-called friends might say.

I shall never forget those long intimate talks we used to have. I am afraid I was still woefully ignorant, and not a very fit helpmeet for him, but as the years have passed on we have grown into each other's ways. I no longer fear that he will be ashamed of me, for as time has gone on I have striven to equip myself to take my place as his wife. Life down by the river in my girlhood's days may have been harsh, but at any rate I think I may say it taught me how to face difficulties.

Eugene told me once how Mortimer Lightwood used to say that the possession of a small income had very effectively prevented him from "turning to" at anything, and Eugene felt this had been the same in his case, but now he had me to care for, there was a driving force in his life which he had never known before. It seems to bring out the best in a man when he has someone to protect and provide for. Anyway, I always feel that it was because Eugene had no one to care for when we first knew each other that he was in real danger of becoming a drifter.

Well, he now has a firmer purpose in life than ever, for I know how his hopes are centred on our little son, six-year-old Mortimer. Of course

we named him after our greatest friend—what a hard task we had to persuade him to accept what he called the responsibility ! I am sure our request pleased him, and somehow I think that, not having settled down in a home of his own, Mortimer Lightwood does like to know that he is always sure of a welcome here in our home, and his delight in watching little Mortimer develop is a real recompense for his burdens as a godpapa. He does not take them very seriously—these burdens, I am afraid, and I do wish I could get both Eugene and Mortimer to come to church with me and the boy on Sundays sometimes. Still, I suppose I must not mind too much so long as Eugene does not interfere with my plans for his welfare.

I wonder how the child will grow up. I look back to the difficulties we had to face in getting my little brother Charlie some learning, and, though he nearly broke my heart afterwards with his selfish ingratitude, yet I cannot be sorry that I contrived things, even at such cost, that he might have his chance.

Things will be easier for little Mortimer. His papa's brilliance has already won him a good reputation, and he seems to be called in to all the big cases that come along. Little Mortimer shows signs of having just such another energetic mind. I know what bright hopes Eugene has for him—he wants him to grow up a clever man. I would say—" a *good* man." My dear Jenny has already won the child's heart. She used to say she did not like children, but she is always happy with Mortimer. When she comes to-morrow for her promised visit I want him to be ready to recite that little poem to her. He began so eagerly to learn it, but then he grew careless about it and has probably forgotten it all now. He so often takes up things enthusiastically and then lets his mind wander to some little pastime. That is a weakness he has inherited from his papa, and I must set myself to mould his character so that he may acquire more earnestness of purpose.

I am sometimes very perturbed about Eugene, because he goes about looking so completely bored. He is keen enough when he is conducting a big case, but then when it is over he walks about the house with his hands in his pockets, looking moody and restless. It reminds me of those dark days when we were both so unhappy about each other. I can't think why he is so bored. I always study how best to please him, but that seems to irritate rather than satisfy him. I must get Mortimer to drop in to-night at supper-time. Perhaps he will cheer him up. Eugene always seems very much more settled when they have been together. I am glad I have never felt jealous of that friendship—partly because I know that Mortimer can fill a place in Eugene's life that I as his wife can never do. Mortimer and our other friends are worth infinitely more than that other circle from which Eugene cut himself off.

There's Mrs. Boffin, for instance—dear, genial Mrs. Boffin, with her happy nature and her kindly helpfulness. I did just permit myself a little grumble to her the other day about Eugene's moodiness. What was it she said ? I remember. " Harkee to me, dearie, life is easier

for you and better for your Eugene, so don't 'ee take things too seriously. After all, you and Eugene aren't even middle-aged yet, and if he spends his days with serious people at his work, he must want a little laughter at home. Take the advice of an old woman, my dearie, and learn to laugh a little more."

"Learn to laugh more!" That sounds easy enough for some people, but my life, anyhow as a girl, was not of the kind to make me in the habit of laughing. Indeed, even now it is a horror to me to think of those dreadful nights on the river, and the fearful sights that met our eyes. Still, after all, Mrs. Boffin has had her real troubles, too; she must be terribly lonely now that dear old Mr. Boffin has gone, and yet she always turns such a cheerful face to the world. I wonder if she is right and whether the way to win back Eugene to those happy confidences of our early married life is by learning to take things less seriously?

ALICE M. HOLMES.

ON INTRODUCING ONESELF TO DICKENS

BY P. CLAXTON WILLIAMS

A YEAR or two ago there appeared in the "Daily Mail" a letter from a Liverpool correspondent signing himself *Cantab.* He had been recommended to read the works of Dickens, he wrote, and would be grateful if any reader would advise him where to begin.

His plain statement of the case argued systematic thinking, while his request for sage counsel betrayed the right idea. Yet, what is the correct reaction to this naive but bold pronouncement? Surprise: that a graduate of the great Merseyside city should have denied himself, for so long, an acquaintance with the Master; or a quiet ecstasy on thinking of the treat he has in store?

My reply, under the proud pseudonym of *A Dickensian,* was in the following terms:—

> A reader asks what is the correct order in which to read Dickens's works. The answer is—almost any order, but with certain reservations. It would be inadvisable for a beginner to start with *Our Mutual Friend,* which has a plot as intricate as a jig-saw puzzle. It would be better to choose a more direct, clear-cut story, such as *A Tale of Two Cities,* or *Great Expectations.* Some prefer to take the books in order, from *Sketches by Boz* to the masterly, unfinished *Edwin Drood* and this plan has much to commend it.

Probably more acute Dickensians will be able to better this instruction, which I can only defend by saying it was the best I knew.

But many will concede that of the twenty and more volumes some present a more pressing invitation to the casual reader than do the rest. Some say, in effect, "Read me, gentle reader. I am made to entertain." Others are less glib with their welcome, though it may be greater in reality.

"Take heed," they seem to warn us, "to enjoy us you must bring all your faculties to us, as our author did. Read us idly, and you will miss our message, and not be satisfied."

But let us return to the works I have named, and consider their effect on a would-be Dickensian who is uncertain where to begin.

Our Mutual Friend is, I am convinced, a bad starting point. Discovering Dickens is like discovering a continent—that is, a continent of historical period, not of geographical space—and before starting on this inland journey one should have a working knowledge of the Dickens terrain. The great distances to be covered, the confusing landmarks, and the difficulties of the trail are sufficient to perplex a beginner. For this reason, then, he should postpone his introduction to this wonderful story until a later day.

A Tale of Two Cities, on the other hand, is, to put it rather baldly, Charles Dickens's best advertisement. The action begins swiftly, even if the reader is perplexed momentarily by the sham Carlyle of Chapter One. There is no undue complication about this story. It is actuated by a sort of dramatic gusto, and a humanism that goes too deep for tears. Where other works might enchant or satisfy, this overwhelms.

Great Expectations, though an inferior tale, has the same type of qualifications. It is swift; it is moving. This is a sound formula for wide appeal.

It is generally understood that Dickens was disappointed with the work, as not realising his own monetary Expectations, but to class it in any way as a failure is to betray one's judgment. I have always found it a singularly powerful tale, an account of trial and achievement, set against the varied backgrounds of the grey desolate marshes, of the old sorrow-ridden mansion, or the false glitter of the London scene.

From the moment when the escaped convict disturbs Pip's lonely vigil in the churchyard the reader's interest is gripped and retained. It is the dramatic intensity of the story that made the film version of *Great Expectations* the best Dickens film of all.

These are, I think, sound reasons why those anxious to introduce themselves to Dickens might well do so through the medium of one of these two works.

There are, of course, no hard and fast restrictions. There are, no doubt, dozens of other points well adapted for breaking in. A reader of ordinary intelligence, picking up the *Sketches* and reading the *Bloomsbury Christening* is almost certain to become a Dickens convert, body and soul. Many do, beyond all question. Captivated by the brilliance of Boz, they enter into full acquaintanceship with the elder Dickens.

For such enthusiasts the order of procedure matters little. They might prefer to begin with *Edwin Drood* and work backward. Nor need there be any disadvantage in this method—with certain reservations, to use my own belaboured phrase. But it is almost certain that, wherever they begin, they will obtain a glimpse of the rich delights in store for them, and be moved to emulate Oliver in asking for more.

ANOTHER NEW DICKENS SPEECH

AT THE MANCHESTER ATHENÆUM, AUGUST 1852

[On August 31st, 1852, the evening before the performance at the Free Trade Hall, Dickens and his company were the guests of the Directors of the Manchester Athenæum, at a Banquet at the Athenæum, in honour of the Guild of Literature and Art. The Mayor presided. Leading members of the Guild were present, including Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, President, who, in responding to the toast of "The Guild of Literature and Art," paid a gracious tribute to Dickens. Referring to the work of the Amateur Company he said, "Foremost amongst all operations, unwearied amidst all difficulties, confident amidst all sneers and cavils, has beat the great heart of that man who has done so much to render literature popular and the people literary. More on another occasion I shall say; but I content myself with this passing homage to a name that must be rising to every lip—I mean the name of Charles Dickens." The following speech by Dickens in reply to the toast of the Amateur Company is taken from the "Manchester Guardian," and has never before been reprinted.—EDITOR.]

MR. MAYOR and gentlemen: On behalf of the company of friends who act with me in more senses than one, and on my own part, who am their representative and mouthpiece here, I beg to tender you our best thanks for the splendid recognition with which you have honoured us to-night. I do so with a feeling of unusual earnestness, because I myself and all those friends are deeply and truly sensible of the heartfelt cordiality with which we have ever been received in this noble town. (Applause.) From our first assumption of the actor's craft here, on behalf of a worn-out man of letters—the author of many excellent dramatic pieces still constantly produced upon the stage, but with no kind of advantage to himself, and with no kind of remembrance of him that I ever heard of—down to this happy hour, a Manchester audience has been so true to us, so affectionate towards us, that in playing to it, we have always felt as if we were playing to one great-hearted friend. And, I do assure you that when our little curtain shall fall to-morrow night for the last time, probably, upon that beaming countenance and that encouraging voice, that have now so often gladdened us, we shall feel a sorrow of no mimic kind, and a regret at parting that will outlive the fiction of the scene. After what you have heard so eloquently said by my friend, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, on the scheme to advance which this little body of friends have been associated together, I feel that it would not be reasonable in me to trouble you with any observations respecting its general claims, or the immense service which has been rendered it by Manchester. In taking the field to promote that object, we thoroughly and sincerely knew it to be a good one—thoroughly and sincerely knew it to be a just reproach to letters and to art that it had been too long neglected—and were thoroughly and sincerely resolved to do all that in us lay to help the need which we knew to exist. Our little labours have, indeed, been labours of love. Careful business consideration of every detail of this project and the most solicitous regard to the more pressing exigencies and weaknesses of our order, must now constitute the strength of the Guild, and must now be the foundation of its steady claim to general public support. What we have done is merely to set it going, and to give it, as we hope and believe, a steady onward impulse. If I wanted, speaking in my managerial capacity—if I

wanted any assurance, which I never did, for I hope I have long known better—that men of imaginative pursuits can co-operate as steadily and staunchly as any other order of men, I should find it in the undeviating punctuality, the regular order, the forgetfulness of self, and the consideration of others which, behind the scenes, off the stage, in the bare daylight when the lamps were out, and there was no gilding on the gingerbread, knit our little association together in most unusual ties. (Applause.) And if I wanted any assurance from you that we are not likely to be very wrongheaded or mistaken in the objects we have at heart, I should find it in the fact that every one of the three eminent writers to whom we have had the gratification of rendering most timely assistance by our theatrical performances before the Guild was devised, have since been placed upon the pension list, and that I know with a delicate consideration for their feelings, most truly affecting to themselves and most truly honourable to Her Majesty and Lord John Russell. (Applause.) I have now the great gratification, with the chairman's leave, of proposing to you to drink, "Prosperity to the Manchester Athenæum." (Applause.) I cannot disguise from you that I feel a kind of ardent godfatherly satisfaction in proposing the toast for I can never forget that I had the honour of presiding over the first of its great meetings. (Cheers.) I can never forget that I am one of its honorary life members, and that my parchment of enrolment in that capacity occupies a proud position upon my study wall at home. (Applause.) In short, I belong to the family, and I contemplate the family's greatness to-night with a glow of family pride. (Applause.) Long, therefore, I most sincerely pray may the Manchester Athenæum flourish, a pattern to the rising enterprise and energy of England, and a vigorous branch of that great social tree which, under the name and form of such institutions, has happily for all sorts and conditions of men, struck its roots deep into this land (Applause.) Long may all political divisions and party dissentions be forgotten here—(hear, hear)—and very long may my old friend, Mr. Crossley, in the character of an allegorical lion, lie down with the radical in the form of an allegorical lamb, on this peaceful neutral ground. (Laughter and applause.) Long, very long may the Manchester Athenæum increase and prosper, work and strive—a noble emblem of the wonderful place in which it rears its head; and long may its young men, generously united to advance generous objects, render such faithful public service as they have rendered to the Guild of Literature and Art. (Applause.) I beg to call upon you to drink prosperity to the Manchester Athenæum. (Cheers.)

WHO—

(*Answers to Questions on page* 110)

1, Bob Sawyer; 2, Mrs. Gamp; 3, Sol Gills; 4, Canon Septimus Crisparkle; 5, Pip; 6, David Copperfield; 7, Mrs. Skewton; 8, Mr. Feeder, B.A.; 9, Mr. Ben Allen; 10, Mr. McChoakumchild; 11, Mr. Nadgett; 12, Mrs. Gargery; 13, Abel Magwitch; 14, Ralph Nickleby; 15, James Carker; 16, Amy Dorrit; 17, Mary Graham.

THE TRAGEDY OF GAFFER HEXAM

By MABEL EVANS

"A STRONG man, with ragged, grizzled hair and a sun-browned face, hook-nosed and with bright eyes and a ruffled head that bore a certain likeness to a bird of prey. Half savage and with no covering on his matted head, with his brown arms bare between the shoulders and the elbow, with the loose knot of a kerchief lying low on his bare breast, in a wilderness of beard and whiskers, with such dress as he wore seeming to be made out of the mud that begrimed his boat, and with business-like usage in his steady eyes." Such is our vivid introduction to that strange uncouth creature of the river, Gaffer Hexam, the widower, and father of Lizzie Hexam, that pearl among Dickens women, and her thoughtless brother Charley.

In what strange surroundings do we first meet Hexam and his daughter! Upon what nefarious business is he engaged? No less horrible an occupation than that of robbing the dead! Hexam is blood-brother to Jerry Cruncher the resurrectionist. Like Jerry he waits for the dark night to hide his deeds. Jerry gathers rust on his hands and clothes from the screws and bolts of coffins, but Gaffer gathers mud and slime from the river; the human flotsam which is his unlawful prey has not had decent burial and must be sought for in the filth and mud. He has taught his daughter from an early age to scull and she can handle the boat as well as her father. It is her lot on the night that we meet her, as it has often been before, to scull her father back to home and safety. A dark object is roped to the boat, for Gaffer always takes his coil of rope on these nocturnal excursions. Very useful is a coil of rope, "Sometimes it lies at the bottom of his boat waiting to be flung round some dark object floating in the river, and then to be tied to the boat to be towed in. Sometimes the coil of rope is round his neck, For Gaffer dresses lightly, remember, with a loose kerchief round his bare neck and the coil of rope gives him warmth on many a blustering night." He sees his daughter shrinking from that dark object he has in tow and though he would take the sculls from her to give her some rest, she will not sit nearer that dread object moving swiftly through the river behind their boat. "It's my belief you hate the very sight of the river," grumbles Hexam. "I do not like it," she replies. "As if it wasn't meat and drink to you," he rejoins; "How can you be so thankless to your best friend, Lizzie? The very fire that warmed you when you were a baby was picked out of the river. The very basket you slept in, the tide washed ashore. The very rockers that I put on it to make a cradle of it, I cut out of a piece of wood that drifted from some ship or other."

Lizzie, touched, perhaps, by that picture of her father fashioning a rude cradle for her so many years ago, and sensing, too, in her father's words his almost childlike love and pride in the old river, touches her lips with her hand and for a moment holds it lovingly towards him. For Hexam is a child after all, a child in a man's rude frame, a child

of great simplicity and cunning, with a love of danger and with only a little moral sense. Hexam, though he would rob the dead nightly, has his own code of honour. He reproaches his "pardner," Rogue Riderhood, for robbing a *live* sailor. He despises him for being sent to prison, and when Riderhood, on a question of ethics, brings up the subject of robbing a *dead* sailor, his reply is illuminating. "You couldn't rob a *dead* man," he says. "Has a *dead* man any use for money? What world does money belong to? This world. What world does a *dead* man belong to? T'other world. How can money be a corpse's? Can a corpse claim it, spend it, miss it? Don't go confounding the rights and wrongs of things in that way. But it's worthy of the sneaking spirit that robs a live man."

So in his confusion of right and wrong, Hexam, with his limited intelligence and imagination, has his own strange code of honour.

He is ignorant and unlearned, despising any form of education for his children, so that Lizzie plots in secret that her brother may have book-learning. She urges the boy to study and contrives how to get a shilling here and there that "shall make Father believe you are beginning to earn a stray living along shore." For Charley is not very much his father's son. His heart is set on becoming a pupil teacher, not a despoiler of the dead; and this beloved sister who has been mother and sister to him all his young life, works in secret to help him on to this goal. Lizzie, too, is unlearned and ignorant. The only books she reads are those in the firelight when she and Charley sit together dreaming their dreams of Charley's success at school; dreams, alas, in which Lizzie can have no part. If she could read or write, father would be angry, would feel that she had betrayed and deserted him; her very ignorance is the tie that binds her to her beloved father; for this strange man is beloved! The gate of learning must open for Charley, his life must be finer than theirs; but she and her father must still be together, shut out from that other world of book-learning. Lizzie loves her brother, but her love for her father is deeper. She sees in her firelight pictures two children left outside their home each day by the widowed father, who dare not leave them inside their poor hovel, lest they hurt themselves or get on fire. They were safer in the streets—in Gaffer's eyes. She remembers and Charley remembers, that often they were cold and hungry; and Charley remembers that under his sister's shawl, it was always warm. "Sometimes it rains and we creep under a boat, sometimes it's dark and we get among the gaslights, sitting watching the people as they go along the streets. At last father comes and takes us home." Oh, the joy of being taken home by this poor wretched father! "Father pulls off my shoes and dries my feet at the fire and has me to sit by him while he smokes his pipe, long after you are abed, Charley. I notice that Father's is a large hand, but never a heavy one when it touches me, and that Father's is a rough voice, but never an angry one when it speaks to me. So I grow up and little by little Father trusts me and makes me his companion and let him be put out as he may, never once strikes me. I should be very glad to be able to read real books. I feel my want of

learning very much, Charley, but I should feel it much more if I didn't know it to be a tie between me and Father."

Happy father to inspire such devotion ! Very proud of his business-like methods is Hexam. When lawyer Lightwood comes to see him he says with pride, " I do everything reg'lar. I've given notice of the circumstance to the police. No time ain't been lost on any hand." Very proud, too, of the fact that though " He can't read and don't want to " the police bills which paper his room are quite intelligible to him. He is clever enough to understand the descriptions of the bodies he has found at varying times in the river. There is a crust of self-complacency about this man. It protects him from learning of the evil suspicions that are abroad about him. He never learns that he is suspected of worse than robbery ; that it is hinted that he helps to their watery grave those whom he recovers ! Perhaps a merciful dispensation of that same Providence that gave him a peerless daughter, and a son who sought to rise by his own efforts in the world of learning.

He learns from Lizzie that his son has run away to school, that he is gifted with book-learning. " Unnat'rul beggar " is his comment. Unnatural to want anything better than the strange dangerous life in their wretched hovel by the river ! Then the floodgates of his passion are released and Hexam reveals his hatred, it almost seems his fear, of that world of learning that his son will enjoy. " Let him never come nigh to ask my forgiveness. Let him never come within sight of my eyes, nor yet within reach of my arm. His own Father ain't good enough for him. He's disowned his own father . . . He's

The Bird of Prey

By Marcus Stone, R.A.

welcome to go but let him never come back . . . Now I see why those men yonder held aloof from me. They says to one another ' Here comes the man as ain't good enough for his own son.' " In his wounded love and pride, he fears this unknown world into which his son will inevitably be drawn. He never dreams of those awful suspicions that his mates hold, quite wrongly as it turns out, and he blames his son for this alienation. Lizzie shrinks from her father as, in his passion against his son, he strikes savagely at the table with his knife. To her almost distracted mind, for she knows of those awful suspicions, there leaps the unbidden picture of her " beloved father " with that knife raised for another purpose. Hexam reads the horror and fear in her eyes and is bewildered. He sees for the first time his own uncleanness in his daughter's eyes : he feels that all the murk and slime of the river is upon him. " Have we got a pest in the house," he cries. " Is there summat deadly sticking to my clothes ? What's let loose upon us ? Who's loosed it ? "

Poor, blind Gaffer ! He was to die with that question unanswered, and as his life was grim and unlovely, so was his death. He goes out alone in the little boat ; he can no longer trust his daughter, the tie is broken. He takes with him the coil of rope. " It is a cruelly cold night and the loose kerchief is but light covering on such a night. He puts the coil of rope around his neck for warmth. He sees some object in the water. He makes ready to secure that object. He unwinds the end of his coil . . . his object drifts up before he is ready for it. He catches at it, bends right over the stern, gets a lurch, overbalances, and goes head foremost overboard. He can swim and instantly he strikes out . . . But the coil of rope is round his neck, he tangles his arms, pulls strongly on the slip knot and . . . it runs home." His body is secured to the boat by the coil of rope as so many other bodies have been secured and he is towed to the place where his body was found. Poor Hexam ! His great tragedy was that he never saw the treasures in his grasp, the joys of his fatherhood, because his eyes were fixed on those murky river depths.

His daughter's love might have been a beacon light showing the way to a better life, but Dickens in his treatment of Gaffer, as in every other instance in his works, placed no romantic halo round the head of wickedness. Gaffer had been evil in his life, he must be evil in his death. Lizzie was happily destined to be the beacon light of another man, probably one not entirely worthy of her ; but the Lizzie Hexams of the world are born to service and the steadfast love and loyalty she had once given to her father, would be given in a like degree to her husband. With true Victorian sentiment, Dickens clears the path for Lizzie, and only Gaffer's turbulent spirit will haunt the dark waters of the old river.

Poor, blind, lonely, ignorant Gaffer. Perhaps Dickens thought of him when he said " Who turns his back upon the fallen and disfigured of his kind, abandons them as vile, and does not trace with pitying eyes the unfenced precipice by which they fell from good, does wrong to Heaven and to Eternity."

LETTERS TO JOHN LEECH

NOW FIRST PRINTED

(*continued from page* 109)

III.

THE publication of *The Haunted Man* was celebrated by the usual Dinner on January 3rd, 1849, and on the 10th of the month following, Leech drew the political cartoon for "Punch" based on his picture of the Tetterby family. The next week appeared another Dickens cartoon, "An Artful Dodge."*

During February Leech and his wife joined Dickens and his wife for a short holiday at Brighton where they met with an unusual adventure. They were staying in lodgings in King's Road when both the landlord and his daughter went raving mad; a fight ensued, in which the Doctor and the nurse were thrown out into the passage. "If you could have . . . seen Leech and me flying to the doctor's rescue," wrote Dickens to Forster, "could have seen our wives pulling us back; could have seen the M.D. faint with fear; could have seen three other M.D's come to his aid; with an atmosphere of Mrs. Gamps, strait-waistcoats, struggling friends and servants, surrounding the whole; you would have said it was quite worthy of me, and quite in keeping with my usual proceedings."

It was not very long after the return to London that Leech's baby died, and Dickens sent his friends the following beautiful letter of condolence:

Devonshire Terrace
March Ninth 1849.

My Dear Leech,

I am deeply distressed (as are all here) to receive your melancholy news. All consolation is poor and feeble in the first blight of such an affliction, I know, but I cannot help sending you this word of affectionate sympathy and friendship.

Try to think it better that the dear little child is spared from greater uneasiness and pain, and is at peace more than she could or would have been if she had lived a few years longer—to take a stronger hold upon you and her mother every day—and to leave a mightier blank in your hearts. Above all, try to remember that she has certainly gone to the inestimable happiness of God, and that she is among his angels evermore.

Our loves to Mrs. Leech, with whom our thoughts are this morning. It is a great relief to hear that the end of your darling was so calm. It must be so to reward you—or will be, when you have thought a little more about it, I feel sure.

I do not write as I would, for I really cannot say what I would. Believe me that all that is cordial, true and earnest—and full of sympathy and interest and affection—is what we feel here, and, that I am quite unable to express because we feel it so sincerely.

Ever my dear Leech,
Affectionately your friend,
Charles Dickens.

John Leech, Esquire.

* See *The Dickensian* 1935, p. 283 and 1936, p. 189 respectively.

Devonshire Terrace.
Saturday Seventeenth March, 1849.

My Dear Leech,

I like the Uxbridge notion very much, and will call for you punctually at eleven on Monday forenoon.

Ever Faithfully

Charles Dickens.

John Leech, Esquire.

Devonshire Terrace.
Twenty Fourth April 1849.
Tuesday.

My Dear Leech,

As Lemon is not producible tomorrow, I take it for granted the walking club does not issue forth ?

Ever Faithfully,

Charles Dickens.

The first number of *David Copperfield* was now ready for publication on the first of the following month ; an early copy was read by Leech, and his appreciation of it was expressed in a letter which Dickens acknowledged in the following terms :

Devonshire Terrace.
Thirtieth April 1849.

My Dear Leech,

I was heartily pleased, just now, at dinner, by the receipt of your note. There are very few things indeed that could be more delightful to me, than such a cordial and genial outburst of praise. You do me good, and make me hold my pen with a steadier hand, afterwards. I thank you with all my heart.

I suppose Lemon will not come on Wednesday. My other half is a little nervous about it ; and I imagined within myself that this was the reason why he didn't come last Wednesday : though I don't attach the remotest importance to any such idea of bringing home infection, myself. In any case, I shall expect you towards two o'clock.

Ever Faithfully Yours

Charles Dickens.

John Leech, Esq.

P.S. I passed Gore House today, and saw the bills up for a Sale (in the East Wind) with a very doleful eye.

The postscript referred to the sale of Gore House following the complete ruin of Lady Blessington.

During May of this year Jenny Lind was singing at Her Majesty's Theatre, Catherine Hayes was appearing at Covent Garden at the same time, and there is little doubt but that Leech accepted the following invitation of Dickens to hear both on one evening :

Devonshire Terrace.
Thursday.

My Dear Leech,

Will you come to Covent Garden tonight, to hear Miss Hayes ? I have just got two orchestra stalls. We have also a box at the other house, and can run over and hear Jenny if we be in the mind.

A verbal answer will do. If Yes—come here.

Ever Yours

C.D.

The next letter refers to one of the many pleasure jaunts in which Dickens always delighted as relaxation from his writing : probably a river trip to Gravesend or Margate.

Devonshire Terrace.
Tuesday Twelfth June, 1849.

My Dear Leech,

I will breakfast on Thursday at half past 8, and expect you if you can come. But remember that we must leave here by 9. We will go to London Bridge Wharf in my little carriage.

I have told Stone there is nothing for tomorrow, but that if he likes to go with us on Thursday, he can.

Ever affecy.

C.D.

Will Lemon go ? I suppose not. Let us arrange (you and I) for one of our preliminary seaside surveys.

The preliminary surveys for a suitable place for a joint seaside holiday, engaged the attention of Dickens during the next few weeks, and early in July Dickens spent a short preliminary holiday at his favourite resort, Broadstairs.

Devonshire Terrace,
Twenty Ninth June, 1849.

My Dear Leech,

Will you look into that almanack which I know you always keep in one of those tidy drawers of yours, and set apart a couple of days in the week beginning on Monday the 16th for our quest of a sea-side retreat ? We had better keep two, or even three, days, open, in case of our going to the Isle of Wight. But I will inquire in the meantime, and have some other places ready to suggest.

Make a note of the days that will suit you best, and then let me know what they are—to the end that I may check them off in my calendar too, and so provide for this grave piece of business, beforehand.

Ever Faithfully

Charles Dickens.

John Leech, Esquire.

Albion Hotel, Broadstairs.
Monday Ninth July 1849.

My Dear Leech,

This has occurred to me.

Supposing I write back to say "done." could you do this: Could you meet me at Folkestone on Saturday afternoon ? all you would have to do, would be to come there by Dover Railway, and Lemon would tell you about the Trains. I myself should be there, any time after 12 at noon.

The advantage of such an arrangement would be, that on Saturday we could make ourselves masters of Folkestone and Hythe —on Sunday, if need were, master Herne Bay—and on Monday morning be in a condition for any fresh start that might be necessary, though I really hope we could establish ourselves, prospectively, somewhere on this coast.

Consider of your arrangements, and tell me, as aforesaid, supposing I write back by return to say "done" could you meet me at Folkestone on Saturday ? I have not the least idea of the domiciliary advantages of the place (there may be none). But I know the place itself to be a good one, and most accessible. And we ought to look at it.

Answer, as like a man of business as may be. Ahem !

There never was such a day as this is, here. I am still of opinion that Broadstairs beats all watering places into what the Americans call "sky-blue fits." Ballard's contradictory habit has settled itself down into unenviable madness. I can advance no proposition whatever, that he will assent to. He lays traps for me. He says things that seem invitations and lures to certain replies, and when I make those replies, contradicts me dead. I praised his little girls today, and he shook his head and said "You should see the boy Sir."

There is no Shower Bath like the Demon. That is my creed. There is but one sea, and the Demon is its showerer. Barnes is several degrees more offensive than ever. Miss Collin, having drunk more vinegar in the recess, is tighter in the waist, and her gowns have washed out a little more, and look like the things that are put on when you have your hair cut. No other news.

Kate and Georgy (who will leave me to go en garçon on our voyage of discovery) unite in love to Mrs. Leech. I send something as near mine as you may think proper.

Ever My Dear Leech
Faithfully Yrs.
C.D.

Albion Hotel, Broadstairs.
Thursday Twelfth July 1849.

My Dear Leech,

Done, to the Train that arrives at Folkestone at 20 minutes past 5, on Saturday. I will be (please God) on the platform to receive you, and will have ordered dinner for 6—but not beds—in case we should take it into our heads to go elsewhere.

Best loves and regards
Ever Faithfully,
C.D.

Broadstairs,
Friday Evening.
Thirteenth July 1849.

My Dear Leech,

No, no, no—don't come to Folkestone tomorrow—strike, but hear me.

I have only this moment heard from some people here who have been there, that Folkestone won't do; that there is neither house-room nor bathing. And the objections to the other little places near it, we already know from Miss Coutts.

What I propose, therefore, is that we start together from London at 9 on Sunday morning, either for Weymouth in Dorsetshire, which I understand is a noble place—or for the Isle of Wight (which is on the same line) or for both, if need be. I will come up to-morrow by the Duchess of Kent boat, which leaves Ramsgate at 10. If I should find you waiting at London Bridge Wharf, we will go and dine somewhere together. If I should not find you there, I shall expect you at Devonshire Terrace in the evening, to arrange for our next morning's flight.

This will save a waste, both of time and money.

Ever Faithfully,

Charles Dickens.

Ultimately, Bonchurch, in the Isle of Wight, was decided upon as the most suitable place, upon the recommendation of the Rev. James White (a frequent contributor to *Household Words*) who lived there, and after a flying trip to view a house (Winterbourne Villa), Dickens rented it from 23rd July until the end of September.

My Dear Leech,

I feel incapable this morning, and if you are for a walk to Blackgang before dinner, will be ready at 12; What do you say?

Ever Faithfully

C.D.

I send you Copperfield.

Winterbourne
Tuesday Thirty First July 1849.

The Dickenses and the Leeches appear to have had a very happy holiday indeed at Bonchurch, where they were visited by their friends, Mark Lemon, Thomas Beard, Frank Stone, Augustus Egg, Thomas Talfourd and others. There was bathing on most days, and delightful walks at all times, followed by entertainments of all sorts in the evenings, including a grand conjuring entertainment provided by Dickens himself. The full story is to be found in Forster. But in spite of all this, the air was not considered by Dickens to be sufficiently bracing, and he was glad to finish up at his beloved Broadstairs. Leech was likewise destined to preserve an unfortunate remembrance of Bonchurch for at the end of September, while bathing, a heavy sea knocked him over. He was put to bed suffering from concussion and became rapidly

worse. He had to be " heavily bled . . . twenty of his namesakes on his temples " as Dickens facetiously wrote to Forster. He was in " such an alarming state of restlessness, which nothing could relieve," continues Dickens, " that I proposed to Mrs. Leech to try magnetism. Accordingly in the middle of the night I fell to; and after a very fatiguing bout of it, put him to sleep for an hour and thirty-five minutes. A change came on in the sleep, and he is decidedly better. I talked to the astonished little Mrs. Leech across him, when he was asleep, as if he had been a truss of hay . . . What do you think of my setting up in the magnetic line with a large brass plate, ' Terms twenty-five guineas per nap ' ? "

Winterbourne, Sunday Night.
Twenty Seventh September 1849.

My Dear Mrs. Leech,

I cannot help thinking that it would be better—and that it would be more comfortable for you—if Beard and I came and sat upon the little sofa in the sitting room until morning. I wish you would think with me, and say yes. The probability is that Leech will fall into a sleep, and get infinitely better, but I don't like to think of you alone there, and it would be an immense relief to me to be your friend at hand, as I ever am at heart. Let me beg you to think of this again—not for any need's sake (thank God) but for your own greater ease, and ours.

Ever Affectionately Yrs.
C.D.

John waits for a word.

Leech got better and returned to London. Not long afterwards Dickens, convinced that the climate of Bonchurch was seriously disagreeing with him, made a sudden departure, and the rest of the holiday was spent at Broadstairs, from which place the following humorous letters were sent to Leech:

Broadstairs,
Friday Fifth October 1849.

My Dear Leech,

We are delighted to receive your good report of yourself, and Mrs. Leech's kind letter this morning.

Being unexpectedly mowed down by a fit of laziness, I went over to Canterbury yesterday—alone—and refreshed myself with a day's rain there. I returned at night, not wholly free from Snases Bloomfildian.

Kate has seen Walter, who says he quite understands what is the matter with her, and that it is nothing but what will very easily yield to very simple medicines, now in course of administration.

There has been a trifle of rain here—a spot or two. But today is one of the most wonderful and charming days I ever saw, the air so brisk and bracing as it is nowhere but at Broadstairs—the Channel so busy and alive with shipping as it is nowhere but off Broadstairs—the hotel so cosy and like a private house as it is

nowhere but in Broadstairs—everything as nothing is out of Broadstairs. Veeve la Broadstairs.

I write, as my friend Mr. Micawber says, "with a sickly mask of mirth," but I am rather behind time, and have been hammering away all day, until I don't know whether this is my head that is oppressing my shoulders, or a pumpkin stuffed with lead. I am off to the North Foreland to enquire.

With loves from all to Mrs. Leech.

Ever my Dear Leech

Faithfully yours

John Leech, Esquire. C.D.

Hotel Ballard, Broadstairs sur Mer.
Tuesday Night Ninth October 1849.

My Dear Leech,

I am quite delighted to receive such brilliant accounts of you, under your own hand and seal. I am well pleased too to learn that you have some idea of coming down here. You cannot think how delightful and fresh the place is (when it's fine) and how good the walks are. Room there is plenty, and to spare. I don't think there is anyone in the hotel but ourselves, and I am sure we could not be more comfortable. So I hope you really will come, and give Ballard a turn.

As to him, he is a more decided and hopeless maniac in point of contradiction, than he ever was. The last summer seems to have ripened him thoroughly. He won't let me have an opinion of my own, and bruises me (as Maclise would say) and dances on my body every day at dinner. Here is a specimen.

Scene, our room. Time, half past 5. p.m. Kate, Georgina and Inimitable, seated at dinner. In attendance, Ballard, and the amiable waiter (the latter, decidedly the most affectionate and soft hearted man in the world).

Inimitable (taking Punch) And how's Miss Collin going on, Ballard ?

Ballard. O, well, Sir, she ain't going on at all—not what can be called going on Sir, you know.

Inimitable (after being a little put down, and slightly recovering). Is she going off at all ? Is she going to be married ?

Ballard. No Sir, not much of that.

Inimitable. No, I suppose not ! (smiles).

Ballard (quickly). Not but what she's been very near it Sir once or twice and is now, indeed. But I never believe a thing you know Sir till its done Sir. (The ladies laugh.)

Georgina (here you must suppose the imitation). But she drinks, don't she Mr. Ballard ?

Ballard. Oh dear no Miss !

Inimitable (to Georgina fiercely). What the devil are you so fond of disparaging people for ? Drinks ! who ever heard of her drinking ! What a damned extraordinary thing it is, that you can't hold your tongue ! I never heard of her drinking (to Ballard) nor anybody else.

Ballard (with a smile of pity). Oh everybody here, has heard of it Sir—and knows it well, but we don't see these things in Broadstairs Sir, and make it a rule among ourselves never to mention 'em you know Sir. It's best not.

Inimitable (much affected by this Christian axiom). You're quite right Ballard. Nobody need know anything about it.

Ballard. Oh ! They can't help knowing all about it Sir.

Inimitable (disconcerted). Why ?

Ballard. Why, you see Sir when you come to be picked up in the street, four times in one winter, it gets talked about you know. It gets to be the talk of the whole place, and who can wonder at it !

(Exit Ballard with dish-cover. Waiter takes round punch and scene closes.)

I think I shall remain here until I have done the No. which will probably be about the 19th or 20th. I am glad to find that you miss me, for I miss you too, and look forward to all sorts of snug evenings and other interchanges of friendship, in London, this next Winter.

Kate and Georgy, Mamey and Katey, unite with me in loves to you and Mrs. Leech. We all hope that if you come, she will come too, and may be we might all return together ?

Ever My Dear Leech

Heartily Yours

John Leech, Esquire. Charles Dickens.

Devonshire Terrace

Wednesday [? October 1849.]

My Dear Leech,

Let it be Hampton tomorrow ! I suppose I had better come to you. Will you tell me (by post or otherwise, so that I may be sure to get your note this evening) at what time I shall present myself at Notting Hill. Don't fail in this.

Saturday, Cobham.

Ever Faithfully,

C.D.

Devonshire Terrace

Thursday Morning, First November 1849.

My Dear Leech,

I forgot last night (of course) an engagement I had for next Sunday. Will you let our Ragged School appointment stand for Sunday Week, when I shall expect you to dinner at 5 ? I have written to à Beckett.

Faithfully Ever

John Leech, Esquire. Charles Dickens.

The cold-blooded murder committed in Southwark by Mr. and Mrs. Manning is a classic crime. The spectacle of public executions had the attraction of repulsion for Dickens. We know from the impassioned

letters which he wrote to "The Times" within a few hours of witnessing "the wickedness and levity of the immense crowd collected at that execution," a sight "so inconceivably awful" such as "could be presented in no heathen land under the sun," that Dickens witnessed the hanging; now for the first time these letters to Leech reveal further details.

His first inclination to watch the crowd which always gathered in large numbers on such occasions, was evidently overcome by the inclement weather no less than the nauseation of the spectacle, for a week before the date of the execution he decided to "cry off." A visit to Sadlers Wells to see Phelps was much more to his liking; but somehow or other he reversed his decision, and was accompanied by Leech and three others. Who they were we do not know.

The letter to "The Times" above referred to appeared on the 14th November, and another and longer one, four days later.

Devonshire Terrace
Seventh November 1849.

My Dear Leech,

Of course you never brought away a cigar case of mine from Hivin's, under a pledge to restore the same to me?

I give in, about the Mannings. The doleful weather, the beastly nature of the scene, the having no excuse for going (after seeing Courvoisier) and the constantly recurring desire to avoid another such horrible and odious impression, decide me to cry off.

If we don't meet before, don't forget 5 on Sunday.

Ever Faithfully
C.D.

Devonshire Terrace
Friday Lord Mayor's Day 1849.

My Dear Leech,

It's Antony and Cleopatra at Sadlers Wells tonight. If you should be disposed to go, I am your man.

Faithfully Always
C.D.

Devonshire Terrace
Monday Twelfth November 1849.

My Dear Leech,

We have taken the whole of the roof (and the back kitchen) for the extremely moderate sum of Ten Guineas, or two guineas each. The passage would clearly have been a dismal failure, and I am not sure but that even this arrangement may turn out a Do.

It is proposed that we meet to supper, at the Piazza Coffee House, Covent Garden, at 11 exactly. But if you should like to wile away the evening anywhere, and will come here at any time you like, I will be ready for you.

Tell me what you say to this last propogicion, by Bearer.

Ever Faithfully,
C.D.

WHO WAS——

1. A lady of very remarkable strength of character, who devotes herself entirely to the public.
2. Always keeping appointments in the City, and the other man never seemed to come.
3. Of too haughty a stomach to beg, to borrow, or to steal; yet mean enough to be worked or borrowed, begged or stolen for, by any catspaw that would serve his turn.
4. Something which smelt like several damp umbrellas, a barrel of beer, a cask of warm brandy-and-water, and a small parlour-full of stale tobacco smoke, mixed.
5. Known to go so far as to boast that he could utterly quell and subdue the haughtiest beauty by a simple process, which he termed "eyeing her over."
6. Bald on the top of his head; and had some thin, wet-looking hair that was just turning grey, brushed across each temple, so that the two sides interlaced on his forehead.
7. Not to be told of anything shocking. Accidents, miseries and offences were never to be mentioned before her. Passion was to go to sleep in the presence of ——, and blood was to change to milk and water.
8. A shy, retiring man; well-looking, though in an effeminate style; with a mild voice, curling hair, and irresolute hands—rings upon the fingers in those days—which nervously wandered to his trembling lip a hundred times.
9. With his coat off and his shirt-sleeves turned up to his elbows, doing all kinds of culinary offices; compounding the strangest dishes; recognised by every one as an established authority; and helping all parties to achieve something, which, left to themselves, they never could have done, and never would have dreamed of.
10. Not strictly speaking, what you would call a merchant; neither was he a banker, nor an attorney, nor a special pleader, nor a notary. He was certainly not a tradesman, and still less could he lay any claim to the title of a professional gentleman; for it would have been impossible to mention any recognised profession to which he belonged.
11. Generally spoken of as "a great manager of children"; and the secret of her management was, to give them everything they didn't like, and nothing that they did—which was found to sweeten their dispositions very much.
12. Always home precisely at ten o'clock at night, at which hour he regularly condensed himself into the limits of a dwarfish French bedstead, in the back parlour.
13. One of those strange creatures who never decline into an ancient appearance, but look their oldest when they are very young and get over it at once.
14. Waiting to be fed; looking sideways through the bars, that he might see further down the stairs, with much of the expression of a wild beast in similar expectation.
15. Surrounded by a mysterious halo of family confidences; of which he is known to be the silent depository.

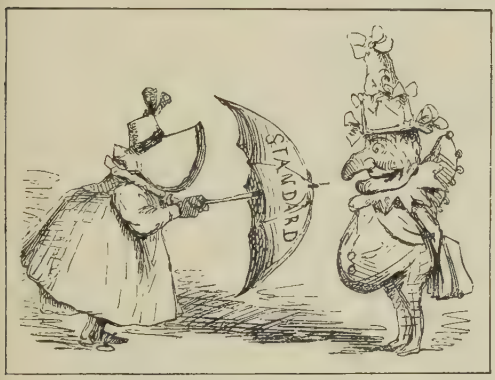
(*The Answers will be printed in the Autumn number.*)

DICKENSIAN PEEPS INTO "PUNCH"

CONDUCTED BY THE EDITOR

X.

IN writing about the letters to Leech in the Winter number we recorded the fact that the second Dickens cartoon in "Punch" had for its subject the immortal couple, Sairey Gamp and Betsey Prig. As the time has now come when in this series of Peeps into the pages of "Punch" we must consider the influence of Mrs. Gamp on the successive editors and artists owning allegiance to Mr. Punch, we give on page 187 a reduced facsimile of this cartoon. We would remark that *Martin Chuzzlewit* had finished its publication in monthly numbers the same month as this cartoon appeared.

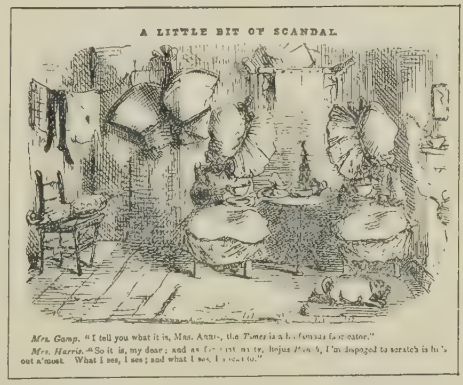


By John Leech 6th December, 1845

It was not until twenty-nine years later that "Punch" returned to this excellent subject for a political cartoon. But in the meantime Mrs. Gamp had by no means been forgotten; indeed, during almost the whole of that period as we shall see, she and her non-existent friend, Mrs. Harris, skipped merrily through the pages of the London Charivari, and were for several years used for the purpose of an onslaught against two newspapers of the time.

Mr. M. H. Spielmann in his "History of Punch" (1895) gives the story of this long-drawn-out feud. I am also indebted to him personally for many additional details and for confirmation on certain doubtful points.

The quarrel began in fun. In February, 1843, "The Morning Herald" had fathered on "Punch" a poor joke of which he was entirely innocent;



Mrs. Gamp. "I tell you what it is, Mrs. Harris, the *Times* is a highly famous fair-weather."
Mrs. Harris. "So it is, my dear; and as for the Post, bless its heart, I'm disposed to scratch its face out a'most. What I see, I see; and what I see, I repeat to."

By John Leech 20th December, 1845

and this he repudiated in an article entitled " Impudent Attempt at Fraud." Mrs. Gamp had not yet been created ; she was to make her bow a few months later.

By John Leech 10th January, 1846

" The Morning Herald " had an evening partner called " The Standard " ; each represented the opposite political opinions to those of " Punch."

I think the quarrel commenced in earnest a little before November, 1845, the date given by Mr. Spielmann. I find in the issue of 12th April, 1845, a trenchant article entitled " Standard Morality—murder and money." It was written by Douglas Jerrold. Those were the days, it must be remembered, when party politics ran high and " Punch," together with " The Times," were zealous supporters of the Liberal interest. " Punch " attacked the " Standard " for printing a detailed account of the execution of a murderer, and particularly for its own hypocrisy over the publication of it. " Punch " used a Dickens simile in discussing the matter, referred to Fagin and the Artful Dodger, stating " we should believe Fagin just as we believe the " Standard."

Now the " Standard " was but an evening edition of the " Herald " and very often was made up almost entirely with the news of the morning paper. Mrs. Gamp and Mrs. Harris were very much in the public mind at the time. A reference to these respective characters had first been used in " Punch " by Horace Mayhew on 7th June, 1845, when, under the title " The Disowned," he said " It seems that ' Young Ireland ' is like Mrs. Sarah Gamp's Mrs. Harris—quite an imaginary personage." Then a month later there were references to " the evening Mrs. Harris " and " Mrs. Gamp of the Herald " ; and in the same number of " Punch " (July 5th, 1845) appeared a

By John Leech 17th January, 1846

paragaph headed "Magnanimous Mrs. Harris" referring to Mrs. Harris having "stated in her Standard." . . .

On December 6th of the same year there were three distinct references to these newspapers; first a reference by Gilbert à Beckett to "The Editress of the Standard" as "the Mrs. Harris of the Press"; then some lines by Percival Leigh, "Apollo 'Punch' to the Standard," with an illustration by Doyle. This was followed by "Punch and the Standard," by Gilbert à Beckett, and the first drawing of Leech in

SAIREY GAMP AND BETSEY PRIG.

Vide "Martin Chuzzlewit."

Sairey I propoge a toast—"Here's better luck next Session."

Cartoon by John Leech, 27th July, 1844

this long series showing Mrs. Gamp tilting her famous umbrella at Mr. Punch (see page 185).

Finally there appeared a paragraph headed "Literary Discovery," by Horace Mayhew, as follows:

By John Leech 6th May, 1846

"The greatest mystery has hitherto prevailed as to the existence of such a creature as Mrs. Gamp's 'Mrs. Harris.' This fact, however, is no longer a matter 'unbeknown.' It is proved beyond a doubt, that Mrs. Harris is no less a person than the Editress of the 'Standard.'"

This must have angered the "Standard," and it was not long before the editor of that paper had an excuse for his revenge. In "Punch" for November 23rd, 1845, appeared a drawing by Leech entitled "Maternal Solicitude," intended to satirise the snobbery of persons who named their children after the Royal Family. The sketch represented a lady calling on a friend with her two children (represented as repulsive-looking youngsters).

"And the dear children?" asks the visitor.

"Why," replies the fond mother, "Alexandrina Victoria is a good deal better; but dear little Albert here is still very delicate."

The "Standard" saw its chance and fully availed itself of it. After referring to some political matter and to "Punch" as being "the most abject, probably of all the 'Times' toadies," it saw in Leech's social satire "a disgusting caricature of the Queen and her family, the most false and unjust in what it implies," etc., etc., to which "Punch" replied by a dignified paragraph on December 20th written by Percival Leigh: "Some account of Mrs. Harris," in which he stated "The perceptions of Mrs. Harris are limited. Hence she is very apt to make ludicrous blunders. Her pertinacity is intense;

Doctor Punch. "So you feel weak and languid, and then irritable, and all-overish like, do you? The fact is, my good woman, there is something very wrong about your circulation; but I think I know of something that will touch you up a little."

Mrs. Gamp. "Ah! Doctor Punch, I wish I had your health and spirits."

By John Leech 17th October, 1846

wherefore when she finds herself in the wrong she persists in it, telling nobody to talk to her, for she knows better, and won't hear a word. The old lady is very bigoted and intolerant, and eaten up with a fanaticism, which she mistakes for piety" and so on.

MRS. GAMP, GETTING A LITTLE BESIDE HERSELF, SENDS FOR A POST TO ANNIHILATE PUNCH.

By John Leech 24th October, 1846

Leech's next contribution to the war on the dual newspapers appeared on December 20th, 1845, and was entitled "A Little Bit of Scandal." The text below, "Some Account of Mrs. Harris," was by Percival Leigh.

During the weeks that followed, the fun was never allowed to wane, and Leech's pencil was busy. We have no space in which to deal adequately with each of the several illustrations which we reproduce, except to add that these drawings were accompanied by special letterpress and that isolated paragraphs and verses appeared regularly with such headings as "Mrs. Harris Hoaxed," "Mrs. Harris a Witch," "Mrs. Harris in Love," "Mrs. Gamp Suggests Suicide," "Mrs. Gamp in the Dismals." These all are found during 1846. "Mrs. Harris on Nations" appeared the following year, together with many small-paragraph references to both that lady and her nurse.

MRS. GAMP DOING PENANCE FOR HER SLANDER OF *PUNCH*.

By John Leech 31st October, 1846

In 1849 on May 12th appeared "Mrs. Harris's Last Bit of Scandal," with sketches by Newman, and on June 3rd some lines to Jenny Lind :—

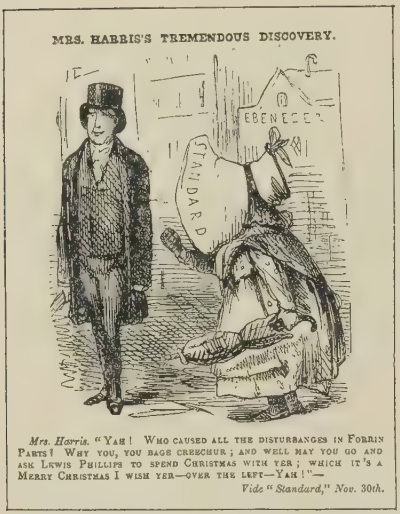
Dear Jenny Lind has changed her mind
And run away to Paris;
So Betsey Prigg (sic) was right, we find—
There is NO Mrs. Harris.

The next reference was not until November 6th, 1852, when a full-page cartoon appeared entitled: "Mrs. Gamp taking the little 'Party' she looks after back to school," the "little party" being Disraeli, the supporter of Protection. Mrs.

Gamp's bonnet is labelled "Ministerial Paper," which, in other words, means the "Morning Herald."

In 1857 there was a change in the proprietorship of the two papers, and on July 4th appeared some verses, "Mrs. Gamp's Farewell to Mrs. Harris." But this was by no means the end. In the sixties, the inseparables were well to the fore again. On May 3rd, 1862, appeared some verses, "Mrs. Harris's Phoenix," commencing:

Mrs. Gamp, as you remember, through Life's wale when we two wandered,
You was then the Mornin' 'Erald, I at that time, was the Standard,
Which, although I say it as shouldn't, and we was jeered by some tomnoddies,
In them days we good old souls was two respectable old bodies.

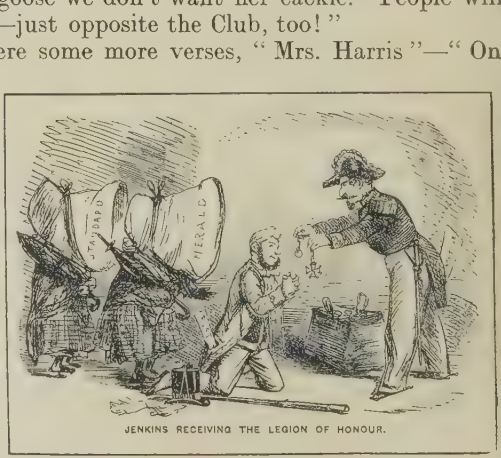

MRS. HARRIS'S TREMENDOUS DISCOVERY.
EBENEZER
STANDARD
Mrs. Harris. "Yah! Who caused all the disturbances in Forrin Parts? Why you, you bage creechur; and well may you go and ask Lewis Phillips to spend Christmas with yer; which it's a Merry Christmas I wish yer—over the left—Yah!"—
Vide "Standard," Nov. 30th.

By John Leech 9th December, 1848

This was at the time when the price of the "Standard" was reduced to one penny; Leech drew a half-page picture of Mrs. Harris—this time "a struggling newsvendor" crying out to Lord Derby and Disraeli, "Stannerd! Stannerd! Only a Penny! Please support an old 'ooman, dear Gents." On this appeal Derby says to Dizzy, "For goodness sake give her a penny, and tell the old goose we don't want her cackle. People will think she belongs to us—just opposite the Club, too!"

In the next month were some more verses, "Mrs. Harris"—"On the report of a row in 'Muster Derby's 'ouse over the way' (where she 'elps)," of which the first two lines ran:

Quarrels indeed! Don't talk to me! Drat such gossip and tittle-tattle!
Wich is well known I'ates tale-bearers, and spies, and all such cattle.



By John Leech 15th November, 1856

Two years later we find the issue for April

9th, 1864, to be a storehouse of Mrs. Standard Gamp and Mrs. Herald Harris. First, the large cartoon by John Leech called "The Idle Gossips," and there was three-quarters of a page of dialogue between the two old women, and a set of verses, entitled "Mrs. Gamp and Mrs. Harris on the Situation," ending with the toast:

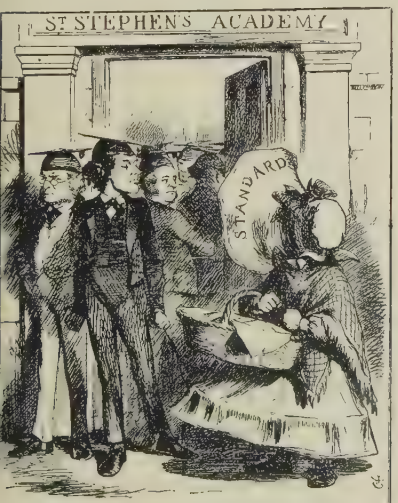
So fill your glass up Betsy,
it's more comfortin'
when it's 'ot,
And 'ere's 'drat and down
with them Palmingstons,
for a shabby, scaly lot.

The next week Charles Keene made what I believe to be his only Dickensian contribution to "Punch," a picture occupying half a page, entitled "The Idle Gossips Again."

In June and July, 1864, John Tenniel contributed two Gamp-Standard cartoons (the first of Tenniel's long series of cartoons inspired by Dickens) representing that lady addressing the boys at St. Stephen's Academy.

THE IDLE GOSSIPS.

By John Leech 9th April, 1864



NEXT HALF.

THE FIGHT AT ST. STEPHEN'S ACADEMY.

Tenniel's First Dickens Cartoons, June 25th and July 16th, 1864

The first was entitled "Next Half" and appeared June 25th, 1864, and the second was "The Fight at St. Stephen's Academy" on July 16th.

This appears to have been the finish of the Gamp-Harris feud, except for a Tenniel cartoon on July 27th, 1867, "The Return from Victory," at the time when Disraeli's Reform Bill had passed the Commons and he was represented as the victor being welcomed by Lord Derby, and supported by Mrs. Gamp as the "Standard" newspaper. But it was by no means to be the last use of these immortals for Mr. Punch's political purposes, as we shall describe in a later article in this series.

DAVID COPPERFIELD'S SOLACE

By WILLIAM HENRY WATSON

IT has been said for over a hundred years that English children cling to their nurses more than they do to their parents. This is quite true; and especially is it true in families having any pretence to education, social standing, local importance, or pecuniary responsibility. The nurse, not the nursemaid; and not the registered nurse as we in America know her (and who, by the way, prefers to be known as Sister in England), was, and is, for all I know to the contrary, as much a family institution, and probably more so, than the Southern Mammy of fact, fiction, or song.

The nurse's peculiar care was the child, or children, from birth to school age, and her affection for them, and their lasting love and loyalty for her, has been the theme for English household tales for years. Her position was unique in the life of the family. In large establishments other servants could come and go. Theirs might be a temporary sojourn or a permanent one. Kitchen staffs could change overnight. Upstairs girls could quarrel with the rest of the establishment and depart to continue their fight in some other field. Footmen could resign because they had been obliged to eat cold meat. Cooks could marry gardeners or coachmen, and seclude themselves in kitchens of their own. Parlourmaids could marry milkmen or postmen and be queens of parlours of *their* own. Scullerymaids could rise to be cook's assistants. And in smaller households, the Mary Anns, the Tildas, the Emilys, the Melias, the Katies, and the Marthas, or whatever handle was given to these maids-of-all-work, could get upset about their afternoons off, and hand in a month's notice to the missus; or could forget to do the dusting one morning and have a month's notice handed to *them*. The general utility man could get tired of his generalship in that particular sphere of utilitarianism, and go and be a private or a captain in some other family's army. In fact, any of these retainers, with the probable exception of the butler (if the family was of sufficient importance to have a butler), could depart in a blaze of glory and a four-wheeled cab; and this circumstance would not be much more than a temporary drag on the family circle of well-being. But, let the *nurse*

leave ! Let her so much as intimate that all was not well with *her* part of the establishment. That was a major catastrophe, to be averted at any cost. Even the children had a hand and a voice in that department. Such an eventuality must not be allowed to happen, and to the everlasting credit and glory of those unsung heroines it seldom did happen. Nurses were, and are, selected with great care, and have a distinct avocation as well as a vocation. They are the women who from necessity or choice, sacrifice homes and children of their own to mother the children of others. They are the willing slaves of a maternal instinct whose lives must be filled at all hazard ; and they are as much a distinct and permanent class as any profession you or I can name or imagine. They are vicarious mothers. They work for love and their reward is love. The love and affection of their boys and girls who have been loved and tended, nursed and amused, schooled and punished, cried over and placated, by nurse ; from their earliest infancy until they depart for school ; and to their credit be it said that " Old Nurse " is never allowed to want or starve while her children have the wherewithal to make life pleasant for her.

The foregoing is intended to serve as an introduction to Peggotty, who was nothing like the impersonation given by the actress in the recent film of *David Copperfield.* There Peggotty was represented by a lady who would have made a better Mrs. Gamp than she did a Peggotty. David's Peggotty was a motherly, affectionate, and good-looking woman in her early thirties (not fifties), and she was, in all respects but one, a mother to David, who was her boy and her first love ; who could do no wrong ; on whom the sun rose and set ; and around whom, as far as Peggotty was concerned, her entire universe revolved. This affection, this love, was, as it always is in such a union of lives, utterly voluntary and mutual. Maternal tenderness and unwavering loyalty on one side, and perfect confidence, complete, profound, and abounding childish affection on the other ; each giving and receiving what the other needed.

Not for me the fluttery, feather-headed, spontaneous mother-love of pretty young Mrs. Copperfield, whose heart ruled her entire existence, but whose head could be turned by empty flattery. David's early care. his very start in life, his disposition ; his permanent attitude towards others (formed with and for us in our early lives) was due to Clara Peggotty. Ignorant of most things that you and I deem necessary to our existence, but profoundly wise in the knowledge necessary to mould the early character of one on whom she poured out an almost overwhelming flood of affection.

Those of us who have been fortunate enough to have had nurses in our families must recognise the truth of all this, and your nurse is one of the most loved of your childish remembrances.

All through *David Copperfield* Dickens returns again and again to David and Peggotty. He is as anxious as I am to impress the reader with the points that I am now trying to impress on you, namely, that David's one solace, his immovable lodestone, his affectionate anchor, his well of perfect understanding, was—Clara Peggotty.

SOME WEAKNESSES OF *OLIVER TWIST*

By A. SIMPSON LECK

THE modern superiority which dismisses Dickens as a "back number," a product of dismal, conventional Victorianism, does not find any echo in me. My tastes in literature do not cause me to feed with any satisfaction on modern fare. Indeed, I could give myself with far greater self-abandon to the criticism of the moderns than to the task I have set myself here. Indeed to Dickens, and to *Oliver Twist*, I owe much. This book and its writer left on my youthful mind a far deeper impression than Fenimore Cooper or Ballantyne or any other of the writers for earlier adolescents.

> "It is the custom on the stage, in all good murderous melodramas, to present the tragic and the comic scenes, in as regular alternation, as the layers of red and white in a side of streaky bacon. The hero sinks upon his straw bed, weighed down by fetters and misfortunes: in the next scene, his faithful but unconscious squire regales the audience with a comic song. We behold, with throbbing bosoms, the heroine in the grasp of a proud and ruthless baron; her virtue and her life alike in danger, drawing forth her dagger to preserve the one at the cost of the other; and just as our expectations are wrought up to the highest pitch, a whistle is heard, and we are straightway transported to the great hall of the castle: where a grey-haired seneschal sings a funny chorus with a funnier body of vassals, who are free of all sorts of places, from church vaults to palaces, and roam about in company, carolling perpetually."

Thus does the author begin Chapter Seventeen of this book. It was living up to this as a philosophy that he wrote it. He had just made the world laugh with *The Pickwick Papers*. Indeed the latter part of the one was written contemporaneously with the earlier part of the other. But not of the same order is the second book! Instead of the hilarious *Pickwick* he issued a book in which he tried to work out the idea that had come to him, a novel "to show the principles of good surviving through every adverse circumstance." The tremendous contrast between the two books is emphatically set out by Chesterton.

> "In *Oliver Twist* . . . [tragedy] broke out with an almost brutal inspiration, and those who had fallen in love with Dickens for his generous buffoonery may very likely have been startled at receiving such very different fare at the next helping. When you have bought a man's book because you like his writing about Mr. Wardle's punch-bowl and Mr. Winkle's skates, it may very well be surprising to open it and read about the sickening thuds that beat out the life of Nancy, or that mysterious villain whose face was blasted by disease."

Now let me turn to the task at hand and draw attention to some things in *Oliver Twist* that are blots upon its landscape, blemishes which are the warts on the nose of this Oliver Cromwell.

The great difficulty of the ordinary reader of to-day with most of Dickens's works lies in the length of the novel, the number of characters it contains, and the number of subsidiary plots that come in from time to time. So far as the first of these is concerned, it must be admitted that this book is shorter than many of the Victorian novels. But people nowadays like a novel that can be taken up and put down read in an evening. I know the reply that the book was written for an age that lingered over all things, and whose reading was not in haste. But we are asking whether this book is to be placed among the literature of the world for all time, and its length is a difficulty to-day. As to the number of the characters—we like not more than half-a-dozen clearly defined people in our books. Here are more than a score of principals, to say nothing of a number of small parts. Not merely is there confusion created by the number of the characters, but the relationship in which they stand to each other becomes confusing. The contacts become so involved that the reader almost needs a pencil and paper upon which to work out the relationship between Mr. Brownlow, Oliver, Agnes, Rose, Monks, Mrs. Maylie, and so on. This could have been greatly simplified and it would have been to the advantage of the tale. As to the subsidiary plots; there are not so many here as in some books of this writer, but there are occasions when the book dallies with incidents that prove only to be "culs de sac"; they have no outlet within the terms of the story. This is all the more embarrassing in a man like Dickens because what at the time looks like a dead-end, may, a hundred pages later, prove to be the way out, and it is hard to know what to retain in the mind as necessary for future use, and what to leave. Gamfield the sweep appears in such a way, and at such a time as would indicate he is to fill an important rôle. The author lingers over the introduction, as though to fix the character in the mind of the reader. But at the end of the chapter the man drops out. Two chapters later again the story lingers while for half a chapter we go with Oliver to the first funeral. But funerals have nothing to do with the tale that is really to be told.

There is also elementary criticism to be offered for the failure of Dickens to revise his chapters for confusions in detail. For example, he is not consistent with regard to Oliver's age at the time of his indenture to Mr. Sowerberry. The story does not fill in a year from the time of leaving Mrs. Mann's farm. There is contradiction as to how long Oliver suffered starvation in the workhouse, and as to what actually were the rations. Other illustrations of the same kind might be quoted. It is admitted that they are details. It is realised also that Dickens was writing under pressure. The instalments in "Bentley's Miscellany" were falling due with grim regularity. But in a writer who has won his place among the immortals we expect care in detail as well as in larger issues.

Now to more serious things. One cannot help feeling that his portraiture in this book is not up to what one expects of Dickens. Oliver Twist himself impresses one as a peg on which to hang ideas

rather than as a living boy. He is at one and the same time too old for his years, and too simple to be real. Was a boy of ten years, brought up in such conditions, likely to have such feelings towards his mother as would inspire him to defend her against the attacks of Noah Claypole ? Cruelty and evil had surrounded him all his days, they were his native air. How then could one so young be so assured of the good and kind that no one had showed to him ? He did not know that virtue existed ; he had never seen it.

That is really part of a larger issue. He had known no kindness. Then, how did he come to expect kindness of life ? Chesterton rejoices in the fact that Oliver is an optimist. How could he be ? This person of gloomy experience, but happy philosophy, is a child of nine, brought up in a branch workhouse under the care of Mrs. Mann. I can understand his asking for more at the workhouse ; hunger prompted that. But I cannot understand, nor accept, the philosophy of happy hope that lies in him. It has had no congenial weather to cause it to germinate.

While Oliver is a prodigy, he is not without being something of a fool. You cannot bring him up in a workhouse, associate him with such characters as the boy with the " wild, hungry eye," and have him innocent. Dickens does so, and adds to the offence by bringing Oliver into contact with Noah Claypole. After such contacts you cannot have your hero so innocent as not to know whence had come the handkerchiefs from which he had to pluck the initials, or how the pocket-books had come into the hands of the Dodger, or what Fagin meant by their heavy lining. And when we come to the story of the game played by Fagin and the boys, the whole thing becomes such that only a child nurtured in heaven could do otherwise than realise the import. Then, of course, there was the awakening in the morning and seeing Fagin with his box of jewels drawn from the hiding-place. The child is certainly too innocent to be real. He is far from being a living character. He is not more than a peg on which to hang ideas.

Fagin is almost a perfect villain, and in many ways is exquisitely drawn. But one flaw ruins the whole. He is *not a Jew.* There is nothing in the story that justifies the nationality that has been ascribed to the old receiver of stolen property. His language is not that of an alien. It is of one who is master of the English tongue. The addition of a few " my dears " to a normal mode of conversation does not make a character into a Jew. Again, a Jew is by instinct religious, even when he is not moral. His language is full of religious oaths and vows. They may not mean much, but they are there. A Jew is full of pride of race. His talk is lavishly sprinkled with references to the great fathers of his race. But all these qualities are missing in Fagin. As a villain, he plays well the part assigned to him, but he denies the nationality given to him.

Bill Sikes makes us shudder ! He has become a by-word for the man of violence and blood. But the character is not quite convincing. Dickens builds him up for the part he has to play. " He's a rough man, and thinks nothing of blood when his own is up." That's what

we feel about him. Murder is inevitable with the sort of man that he is. But there is failure to see the character through. Such a man would never have been filled with horror at a mangled form. This is not the sort of man to fly "from memory and himself." He is not the man to come back again to the scene of his crime. The last scene of Sikes is done in masterly fashion, but the last few links that bring the chain to this end are not forged of the same material as the rest of the chain.

As to the character of Nancy; again inconsistency. She is an obviously divided personality. I know the defence that Dickens makes in the Preface, but it does not really meet the charge. It is not her loyalty to Sikes that is doubted; but the two violent natures in antagonism. You cannot mix black and white without making a grey, unless you will cause the one colour in the end to overcome the other. There is nothing grey in Nancy, nor is there victory for either side of her nature. From beginning to end she is a case of pathological divided personality.

But Dickens is never at home in his drawing of women. There is hardly a success in all his works. However, to confine ourselves to this book. Rose Maylie (or Fleming) is altogether too remote and unnatural. The only woman that stands out is Mrs. Bumble, and there are none of the qualities of womanhood about her. There is nothing in her make-up that would require to be changed to make a male character. Only her skirts make her a woman.

I might also stay here to draw attention to the fact that in common with the majority of his books this one has no happy home in it. Happy married life Dickens rarely attempts to draw. Mr. Brownlow's home is good, but there is no Mrs. Brownlow. Mr. Brownlow had hoped to marry, but his hopes had been destroyed. Mrs. Maylie's home was a haven of rest, but there was no husband in it. She was a widow. Granted that at the last we are told that Rose Fleming and Harry Maylie marry and are happy. But we have to wait until the last chapter for that (except for the bare statement that on the same day as their marriage the couple "entered into possession of their new and happy home"), and the one paragraph is rather a setting out of the perfections of Rose in a remote, unreal, strained, unnatural sort of way, than a portrayal of the joy that is associated with married life. It is significant to notice the words with which the paragraph is introduced,

> "And now, the hand that traces these words, falters, as it approaches the conclusion of its task; and would weave, for a little longer space, the thread of these adventures."

It is as though the author feels that he is to portray that which it is beyond his power to paint.

What ghosts of the novelist's own experience are here? Memories of a home with a Mr. Micawber for a father, and a Mrs. Nickleby for a mother! Are these the warning shadows that speak more than he dare tell of his own home, and of the shipwreck that came of it at the end?

Noah Claypole and Charlotte are strange creatures. They are, perhaps, in some ways as near a perfect match in the way of complementary characters as literature provides for us. Noah is the perfect Sadist, the one who delights to be cruel. Charlotte is an equally perfect masochist, the one who finds pleasure in having pain inflicted on her. But I cannot see why these two need to be dragged into the story again toward the end. But that is the way of Dickens. He likes to have as many characters as he can pack on to the stage for the last scene. Noah has really no special contribution to make at the end of the story. Anyone would have done for the purpose of spying on Nancy, and the pair brought in for the purpose would not have been missed if they had been left in the kitchen of Sowerberry's.

But the greatest weakness of all is the way in which the book fails to achieve the goal which the writer has set before him. He aims "To show the principles of good surviving through every adverse circumstance." He does not achieve the aim.

On the one hand the conclusion of the book seems to be almost haphazard. On one occasion he admitted he did not know what to make of the Jew. That seems to be true of other characters. In the end he disposed of them in somewhat arbitrary fashion. Charlie Bates he allows to repent, but he sends the Artful Dodger to transportation. Nancy is murdered, but Claypole and Charlotte go free. In each case the better suffer and the worse go free.

On another hand, he says that he wishes to show good surviving. But the good that survives is small compared with the good that is sacrificed. Agnes, the innocent girl, betrayed, is left to her fate and her honour, which it would have been easy to vindicate, is left stained. Rose is left to suffer at the hands of cruel people for years, and when rescued is left again for years, nameless, and feeling the slight most keenly. Poor Dick, the child companion of Oliver, is left to die.

The effect of the book is negative rather than positive. In other words, it is not a justification of providence as the writer claims it to be, but a pasquinade against moral, social, and political institutions. The workhouse of the day was condemned. Justice as it was too often dispensed was pilloried in the hideous behaviour of Mr. Fang.

The spirit of revolt was in Dickens. But in his attack there was a naïvete that attracts. It is this which at the end breaks down our criticism. We see the weaknesses, the immaturity, the crudity, but we forget it in the unassailable sincerity of the man. He is a prophet denouncing his world. He claims that he is a man with a gospel. He is not that. He belongs to the Old Testament order of prophets, rather than to the New Testament order of Apostles. He denounces. He stands by the prophets as they cry against those who oppress the poor and the needy, and who are cruel to the fatherless. He does not show us the success of good, but he does show us the evil of evil, and whither it leads.

THE BLACKING LAUREATE

THE IDENTITY OF MR. SLUM, A PIONEER IN PUBLICITY

By WILFRED PARTINGTON

THE originals of many famous people in the novels of Dickens have been identified; and Dickensian experts seem to have exhausted this fascinating subject of research. Nevertheless, there remain some characters of whom we would like to know more, but whose origin is "wropt in mystery." Among them is that pathetic and whimsical person, "Mr. Slum," who—as described in *The Old Curiosity Shop*—wrote the poetical puffs for Mrs. Jarley's Waxwork Show.

The identity of "Mr. Slum" is of interest not only on account of his rôle as a Dickensian character, but because he was a pioneer of publicity. His advertisements in verse were the forerunners of a long series of such effusions: the rhymed puff is as popular to-day as ever.

In Forster's "Life of Dickens" there is an autobiographical fragment written by the novelist and supplied to the biographer for the purpose of the "Life." The fragment is one of the most moving documents in biography. In it Dickens describes how, owing to the reduced circumtances of his parents, he was set to work, at the age of 12, at Warren's Blacking Factory, 30 Hungerford Stairs, Strand; whose wainscotted rooms and rotten floors were infested with old grey rats. Their squeaking and scuffling he never forgot.

Forster appends to this fragment some further information by Dickens, given in conversation, to supplement the autobiography. There were two rival Warren's Blacking manufacturing businesses—one carried on by Robert Warren, the other by Jonathan Warren, both employing rhymesters to advertise their wares. Jonathan claimed to be the inventor of the famous recipe. Just before the twelve-year-old Dickens was employed by the firm owned by Jonathan, that manufacturer sold his business at 30 Hungerford Stairs, Strand, to George and James Lamert; who, however, continued to use the former owner's name.

The poems and rhymed stories belauding the Warren blackings are a conspicuous feature of nineteenth-century books and periodicals. Forster's record of Dickens's additional information is:—

> "The rivalry of Robert Warren by Jonathan's representatives, the cousins George and James [Lamert] was carried to wonderful extremes in the way of advertisement; and they were all very proud, he told me, of the cat scratching the boot, which was *their* house's device. The poets in the house's regular employ he remembered, too, and made his first study from one of them for the poet of Mrs. Jarley's waxwork."

This then is Dickens's own evidence as to the origin of "Mr. Slum."

When I was working on the original unpublished correspondence received by Sir Walter Scott in the collection of Sir Hugh Walpole,* I came across, among many extraordinary letters, one accompanied

* "The Private Letter-Books of Sir Walter Scott." (Hodder and Stoughton, 1930). "Sir Walter's Post-Bag." (John Murray, 1932).

by three large folded sheets bearing odes and sonnets, all written with painfully elaborate care, in ruled spaces. The letter was from Alexander Kemp; who, as a fellow-countryman, wrote this touching appeal to Sir Walter Scott:

London, 173 White Cross Street.
St. Luke's,
10th June, 1823.

To Sir Walter Scott, Barot.,
Edinburgh.

Sir,

Obtruding even for a few moments on your invaluable time I feel as if committing an act of public injustice, yet I anticipate your forgiveness when I truly affirm that on the favorable result of this letter probably depends the prolongation of my existence!

Thirty-two years ago I left Caledonia, my native land, and after a short residence in Ireland proceeded thence to London, in the visionary hope of ultimately acquiring an independency, but Destiny had determined otherwise, and my present allotment of misery comprises desolation, penury and despair!

The last situation which I held was that of Clerk in a Public Office, but the Establishment having been broken up in February 1817, I was cast adrift on the World, unprovided for. Since then I have derived a meagre subsistance by writing for the metropolitan press and occasionally increasing the store of juvenile books at the emporium (Harris's) St. Paul's Church Yard. These resources are no longer available; and having out-lived both relatives and friends, I stand alone in the Universe, unsolaced and unassisted, with the exception of Mrs. Opie of Norwich to whose benevolent sympathy I am greatly indebted.

My early years, and subsequent leisure opportunities, have been much devoted to literature; and my MS. Volume of Original Poetry has been submitted to the perusal and honored with the approbation of several eminent writers. From that Volume I presume to annex a few extracts; and add at same time a specimen of puffing advertisement, of which I have written for Warren (30, Strand) above two hundred, all of different incident, but all embracing the same hacknied subject of eulogy, the "unparalleled Blacking"; for the remuneration of Two shillings and Sixpence each!

If I can find a purchaser for my manuscript, or am enabled to publish it by subscription, I humbly entreat permission to dedicate the work to Sir Walter Scott, under whose august patronage it may successfully pass the ordeal of public opinion.

In the meanwhile, suffering the heavy pressure of calamity, might I dare to hope in my behalf the exercise of your philanthropy, the boon of benevolence will avert Despair and to the latest moment of my life shall be gratefully appreciated.

Permit me, if reference is considered necessary, to give Mrs. Opie of Norwich; N. Kirkland Junr. Esq., General Army Agent, Waterloo Place; John Mayne Esq., Star Office, Temple Bar; and Messieurs Jones, Publishers, Warwick Square, London.

I am, Honorable Sir,

Your faithful, obedient humble servant,

Alex. Kemp.

At Mr. Powell's Green Man and Still, White Cross Street.

It is a reasonable theory that here in Alexander Kemp we possibly have the original " Mr. Slum." He wrote his appeal to Sir Walter in 1823, only a few months before the boy Charles Dickens was slaving miserably in the horrible warehouse at 30 Hungerford Stairs, Strand.

In the London Directory of 1823 Jonathan Warren is given as the " Original Inventor of the Blacking sold under that Name." But Robert seems to have shone most ; and his address at 30 Strand was so envied by the Jonathan faction that they would print " 30 " and " Strand " in very large letters, with " Hungerford Stairs " very small —and sometimes the stairs disappeared altogether !

Kemp's reference to his employer " Warren (30 Strand) " might mean either Robert or Jonathan, or both. Some of his rhyming advertisements can be traced under Robert's name ; but he might also have written for Jonathan or the Lamerts on the quiet. Certainly " Mr. Slum " would have done.

Anyhow, Kemp, who had written over 200 poetical puffs, was evidently the chief poet of the industry—the Blacking Laureate. One of his effusions, sent as a specimen to Scott, is perhaps the most famous of all the Warren advertisements—" Pug in Armour, or the Garrison Alarmed "—which was invariably illustrated by a drawing of a monkey, head and body stuck in a shiny top-boot. Young Dickens would be most likely to remember the principal Blacking Bard, whose " Pug in Armour " was to be seen in so many periodicals of the time. Moreover, the letter and circumstances of the unfortunate Alexander Kemp in many points accord with the picture of " Mr. Slum " as portrayed by Dickens.

It will be recalled that " Mr. Slum " comes on the scene in *The Old Curiosity Shop* at the time when Little Nell joins the staff of Mrs. Jarley and her Waxwork Show—the " delight of the nobility and gentry and patronised by the Royal Family."

> " You are acquainted with Westminster Abbey, Mrs. Jarley ? " says Slum.
>
> " Yes, surely."
>
> " Then upon my soul and honour, ma'am, you'll find in a certain angle of that dreary pile, called Poets' Corner, a few smaller names than Slum," retorted that gentleman, tapping himself expressively on the forehead to imply that there was some slight quantity of brain behind it. " I've got a trifle here now," said Mr. Slum, taking off his hat, which was full of scraps of paper—" a little trifle here, thrown off in the heat of the moment, which I should say was exactly the thing you wanted to set this place on fire with. It's an acrostic—the name at this moment is Warren, but the idea's a convertible one, and a positive inspiration for Jarley. Have the acrostic ? "
>
> " I suppose it's very dear," said Mrs. Jarley.
>
> " Five shillings," returned Mr. Slum, using his pencil as a tooth-pick. " Cheaper than any prose."
>
> " I couldn't give more than three," said Mrs. Jarley.
>
> " ——And six," retorted Slum. " Come. Three-and six."
>
> Mrs. Jarley was not proof against the poet's insinuating manner, and Mr. Slum entered the order in a small note-book as a three-and-sixpenny one.

Which was an improvement on the half-crown Alexander Kemp received for the Warren poetical puffs. But then, Mrs. Jarley was a susceptible lady.

Mrs. Opie, whose benevolence is acknowledged by Kemp, was the novelist and poet, and wife of John Opie, the portrait and historical painter. An ode to her, included on the large-spaced sheets sent for Scott's perusal, shows Kemp (or "Mr. Slum," as I suggest he was) in more ambitious flights than he was wont to take as Laureate of Blacking. It ends :

> To thee, as to thy Opie, given
> On Immortality a claim ;
> His virtues pass'd from Earth to Heaven
> Yet still exist in deathless fame ;
> His pencil to thy pen assign'd
> To charm, instruct and grace mankind !

Another of the specimen odes sent to Sir Walter is "Inscribed to Alan Cunningham" ; and in it the tearful Bard of the London Blacking factory is borne by Memory's "nightly spell to Scotia's land."

But alas ! The only verse of "Mr. Slum" destined to have the wide appreciation he sought was that in hacknied eulogy of the "unparalleled Blacking."

A COLLECTORS' MEETING

A VERY successful meeting of collectors took place on Friday evening, March 18th, at 48 Doughty Street, when all those who had signified their intention to attend were present.

Mr. Miller outlined briefly the object of the meeting, namely :— "To exchange or purchase items of Dickensian interest and to discuss relative matters."

He explained that the prices should be within the limits of collectors of moderate means, and that it was not intended, at present, to discuss the purchase of the more expensive items.

An informal conversation followed, proving of great value, each member contributing some idea to assist in putting the proposed Collectors' Club upon a proper basis.

After the discussion each member in turn submitted items for mutual education and approval. Several purchases and exchanges were made and the members separated highly pleased with the evening's conversation and business. The next meeting will be held on Friday, June 24th.

DICKENS'S LETTERS TO HIS WIFE

OUR readers will be glad to learn that this important publication has just been re-issued by Messrs. Constable and Co., at a cheaper price, viz. 5/-, which should bring it well within the means of every member of the Fellowship. The subject of Dickens and his wife is one of absorbing interest, and in this volume the whole story is told for the first time in Dickens's own words.

A DREAM OF CHALK AND MASTLESS SHIPS IN A MUDDY RIVER

By W. LAURENCE GADD

IN a sense, I was on tramp: that is to say, I was following the track of David Copperfield and looking for the place where he slept on the second night of his flight from London to Dover. I had been told, on good authority, that I should find it at Fort Pitt, but I knew all the old forts round Rochester and Chatham, and had decided, in my own mind, that Fort Pitt would not do; so I went on tramp to investigate.

By the "Coach and Horses" inn, at the top of Strood Hill, I overtook a bright little fellow to whom I was strongly attracted, and as he readily responded to my greeting, we went on very amicably together.

My little companion was about nine or ten years of age; rather small and delicate-looking for his years, but with a bright and vivacious countenance and very expressive eyes. I learned from him that he had been to look at a house he much admired, at Gadshill, and was returning to his home in Chatham. Also that he went to school in Rhode Street, but did not often take part in the rough play of his schoolfellows, his chief delight being the reading of books. He seemed to be familiar with several novels not usually read by boys of his age, and with "Robinson Crusoe," "Don Quixote," the "Arabian Nights," and other books—all about scimitars and slippers and turbans, and dwarfs and giants and bluebeards, and caverns and forests and Valentines and Orsons; and all true. He knew all the nooks and corners of the ancient city of Rochester, and evidently possessed a power of perception and observation remarkable in one so young.

He told me that on hot days, such as this, he loved to retire to a favourite and secluded spot where he could lie on the grass, quite undisturbed, and read books all afternoon. Sometimes, he even stayed there until after dark, to watch the twinkling lights in the town, and to say "good-night" to one clear shining star that came out in the sky before the rest. He could see this star from his bedroom window at home, shining near the church spire and above the graves, but it seemed to be larger and grander, floating in immense space, when he looked at it from the top of the hill.

I conceived such a strong desire to see this place that I asked him if he would show it to me, and, after a little consideration, he agreed; but on the condition that I would not tell any other boy. I assured him that no boy should learn the secret from me, whether he were a Baker's Bully, a New Road Scrubber, or a Troy Town Rat; at which my young friend gave me a bright look of comprehension, and, taking my hand, assumed charge of the expedition.

By this time we had passed the tollgate, with its gatehouse and lamp, at the corner of Frindsbury Road, and were close to the bridge. Crossing the river we came, by way of the bridge Chapel of All Sloven

and the fourteenth century " White Hart " inn (in which, I bethought me, Samuel Pepys once stayed a night), into the High Street. We paused to look at the Guild Hall, with its railed-in fore court and the gilded model of H.M.S. " Rodney " surmounting the cupola, while my companion described to me the shiny portraits hanging round the Justice Room on the first floor; and also to admire the large clock, projecting over the pavement from the front of the Clock House.

On the north side of the narrow street, the buildings were baking in the sunshine, and the many small panes of glass in bow-windows sparkled with reflected light. On the other side, the shadows of the houses and high-peaked gables afforded welcome shade. The street looked sleepy and deserted, with very few people about, except the saddler and the corn merchant, who were taking the air in their respective shop doorways; and no traffic beyond an occasional slow-moving cart or tilt wagon. The sound of a distant horn, however, galvanised the town momentarily, and drew to windows and open doors at least a dozen people to watch the Blue-eyed-Maid coach, from London, pass along the narrow way at a brisk trot.

By the " Rising Sun " at the bottom of Star Hill we again paused for a few moments, while my little friend pointed out the theatre, to which he was sometimes taken, as a great treat; and further on, at the Banks, we stopped to look at the quaint figure of an auctioneer bursting out of a pulpit, which was elevated over the door of a sale-room. A few more yards brought us to Sir John Hawkins's almshouses for decayed shipwrights and sea-faring men, which mark the boundary between Rochester and Chatham, a bit of local knowledge my guide did not possess; but as we traversed Chatham's High Street he regaled me with much information about the dockyard, in which his father held a position in the pay office. He told me about the gangs of convicts, with irons on their legs, toiling in the sun with great baulks of timber, chain cables, and heavy round cannon shot; and about the floating hulks, moored by great rusty chains, in which the convicts were confined at night.

Towards the dockyard my guide led me by the river foreshore and the Military Road (originally constructed by convict labour, and closed by gates at the High Street end), until we came to a street called the Brook, where he pointed out one of a pair of very small but respectable-looking houses, with a tiny front garden and wooden paling, as his home. Nearly opposite to this house we struck off to the left up a steep and narrow lane called King Street. This was a very old part of Chatham; the houses, some of them of weather-board, but mostly of brick, with tiled roofs of the mansard type, being inhabited by very poor people. On each side were little courts and nooks, approached by narrow alleyways, and teeming with ragged children and slatternly women. At the top of the lane, which was quite short, there was a railed-off piece of waste land, overgrown with nettles and weeds, and a little dark shop occupied by a second-hand clothes dealer, known to my guide as " Old Charley "; a bleary-eyed, disreputable old drunkard, commonly believed to have sold himself to

the Devil and a butt for all the boys in the neighbourhood, some of whom were goading him from the safe vantage points of adjacent corners.

Old Charley scowled darkly at us as we hurried by, but without stopping, we climbed a stiff bit of rising ground to the top of a grassy slope, dotted with hawthorn bushes, from which we looked down upon the river and the town spread out below us. Behind us, the slope ended with a dry moat, twenty-five or thirty feet deep, beyond which rose smooth brick walls, with, at about our own level, embrasures out of which the black muzzles of two or three cannon, on massive wooden carriages, peered inquisitively. Some sixty or eighty feet below us, on the west side, a narrow lane from near St. Mary's Church seemed to lead to the main gate of the work, but the lane was empty, and, except for ourselves, the whole hillside was empty, and there were only two or three soldiers, in flat caps and white trousers, to be seen on the whole expanse of the lines to the east. The only sounds that reached us were a subdued, melodious hammering from the distant dockyard, and the tramp of a sentry somewhere below us.

We sat down in the shade of one of the few bushes near the moat, and I smoked a pipe while my little friend talked. He spoke about his brothers and sisters; their nurse, Mary Weller, and the fairy-tales with which she regaled them; about the old houses in Rochester, and the quiet echoing courts behind the High Street; about the annual procession of dockyard blacksmiths' apprentices on St. Clement's day, when they sang "Old Clem" in chorus; and as he talked, I pictured in my mind a distinguished future for him when he came to man's estate.

A slight fall of temperature, and a few spots of rain, roused me from the reverie into which I had fallen. I rose up and looked about me.

The sun was sinking, and beyond a wide bend in the river the massive square tower of Rochester's Keep, and the more slender tower of the cathedral, now again crowned with a Norman spire, stood out sharply against the western glow and the misty wooded heights about Gadshill and Cobham. Below me the lane and the fields were gone; the grassy slope, overgrown with thickets of prickly bushes, ran down to the Town Hall, the Royal Sailors' Home, and other imposing buildings. To the south a haze of smoke hung over a prospect of streets and houses clinging to the hill sides, as far as the eye could reach; while, close by, the column of the Naval War Memorial towered upwards from the crest of the Lines, a landmark visible for miles from almost every direction. Steamers hooted on the river; a train shrieked as it ran into the tunnel beyond the station; and the continuous hum of omnibuses and motor-cars came up to me from the streets below.

Beside me, the Spur Battery, perched on the precipitous western end of Chatham Lines, was derelict and deserted. The cannon were gone; and the moat was choked with trees and undergrowth; but the sign of authority, in the shape of a small union flag, still fluttered from a diminutive flagstaff.

But, with all the changes of more than a century, enough remained to convince me that the glacis of the old fort, upon which I stood, was the grass-grown mound upon which David Copperfield slept under the stars, on the night he toiled into Chatham, after getting through three and twenty miles of dusty travelling on the Dover Road. He crept upon a sort of grass-grown battery, above the place where a sentry walked to and fro, and, screened by a bush or two, lay down near a cannon. And in the morning he was quite dazed by the beating of drums and the marching of troops on the adjacent Lines before he went down towards the long, narrow street.

As I came down, I saw that King Street, Cross Street and Queen Street, and all the little courts and alleys on the east side of the Brook, were demolished and the whole area was a wilderness of bricks and holes and mounds of earth; with, here and there, a solitary dilapidated old tenement, cheek by jowl with modern council houses rising from the ruins.

And as I passed the little house in which the boy lived during the two or three years when he derived his most lasting impressions; and as I thought of all that his books have been to me throughout my life, my heart was full of gratitude for the genius of Charles Dickens.

THREE GREAT LOSSES

We regret to record the deaths of three valuable members of the Dickens Fellowship.

On 18th April there passed away Sir Stephen Killik, G.B.E., K.C.V.O., who was President of the Dickens Fellowship in 1935-37. He was Lord Mayor of London, 1934-5, when the "Lord Mayor's Show" was mainly Dickensian in character, and included several emblematical cars and the *Pickwick* Stage Coach. Towards the end of his period as President, Sir Stephen was prevented through illness from taking his customary place in the Chair, and at the close of his year he wrote, with the modesty of a truly great man, "Anything I could do for the Fellowship has been done with great pleasure, and I regret that my recent illness has prevented me from taking part in some of your meetings which I should much like to have attended."

Major-General Herbert Southey Neville White, C.B., M.V.O., who died on 25th February at the age of 76, was not only a great soldier and a noble gentleman, but also an erudite and enthusiastic Dickensian.

He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Fellowship from 1924 to 1929, and a Trustee of the Dickens House since its opening in 1925. He regularly attended the Trustee meetings and took the Chair as recently as April, 1937. Anyone who spoke with General White must have been struck with the very wide range of his reading, but he showed his preference for *The Pickwick Papers*, and anything connected with Dickens fascinated him.

As we go to press we learn of the death in Melbourne of Dr. Cumbrae-Stewart, Registrar of the Queensland University and for many years President of the Brisbane Branch of the Fellowship, in which he took a keen personal interest.

S. J. R.

OF FIRST-CLASS IMPORTANCE

THE NONESUCH EDITION OF DICKENS'S LETTERS

By J. W. T. LEY

IN looking through this big heavy volume* (I confess I have not had time to read it " right slap through " as yet), three or four thoughts become dominant. First I bow to Mr. Dexter's wonderful enthusiasm and industry. The seeking out and copying of thousands of letters has been the work of years ; the preparation of them for this publication must have called for amazing concentration and industry. Then, of course, one is pleased with the production of the volume—with the work of designer and printers. The Nonesuch Dickens is beyond praise.

But there comes the reflection that so important a publication must presently be made accessible to the mass of Dickens lovers. Of this edition only 877 copies are available. The work is too important to be thus limited, and I hope that within a reasonable period we shall have an edition at a price within the means of the average Dickensian.

Of the importance of the publication there is no doubt at all. I may perhaps convey my conviction of that fact (without, I hope, being misunderstood) by saying that this work of Mr Dexter's puts back my edition of Forster to where the original book stood before I began to annotate it. Just think of it. At a conservative estimate this first volume contains 420,000 words. Assuming the next two volumes to be of similar size the world will have in carefully edited form thousands of letters of Dickens's running to more than a million words. It requires no imagination at all to realise that in those pages are scores of sentences that throw fresh light on very many phases of the novelist's life and work.

In point of fact, these volumes in themselves are a practically complete biography—or, rather, autobiography—of Charles Dickens. The first letter is dated February, 1832, so that from the time he is exactly twenty years old we have him recording his practically day-to-day experiences, contacts, thoughts. We have a complete self-revelation of a man who still interests more people that most other men that have lived. Do I exaggerate, therefore, when I say that this is a contribution to English literary history of really first-class importance ?

Another thought. One reflects on the industry of this man, Charles Dickens, and stands amazed. These letters cover a period of 38 years. When they begin he is working hard as a newspaper reporter—up all night in the Gallery, travelling up and down the country in stage coach and post chaise. He is torn unceasingly by domestic worries caused by his unmoral father. Presently the world begins to open out for him. He begins to write ; he achieves unprecedented success ; he achieves a popularity still unparalleled. For more than thirty years books of still unrivalled creative fecundity are given to the world.

* " The Letters of Charles Dickens " Edited by Walter Dexter, in the Nonesuch Dickens Series, Vol., 1, Bloomsbury, The Nonesuch Press.

He starts a big daily newspaper; he starts and edits with brilliant success two weekly magazines. Contributions—essays and short stories—to three magazines pour from his pen incessantly. He is in continual demand as a public speaker; he is frequently organising amateur theatricals on an unequalled scale; he is regularly engaged in charitable work; he lives a full and rich social life; he journeys up and down the country giving his public readings; twice he tours America; often he is travelling on the Continent. And amid all this he writes literally thousands of letters of the most delightful character to scores of friends. Not Gladstonian postcards, be it noted, but *letters*, letters that the recipients were glad to read and glad to preserve; some of them running to many hundreds of words. Over and over again we have long rich passages describing with touches of his inimitable drollery travels in this land and in other lands. The letters are replete with delightful little character sketches. And there were no typewriters in those days! All written with quill and steel pen, often by candle light, often by naked gas light! Is it not staggering to reflect on the astounding energy, mental and physical, of the man?

And let this be said. These volumes emphatically give the lie to the detractors of Dickens. It is impossible for an honest man to read these letters and doubt the essential warmth and goodness of his heart. The very fact that his friends—famous men and women—so carefully preserved his letters is in itself a great tribute to the man. They *must* have held him in exceptional regard.

Of course, a considerable number of the letters have been published before. There are the volumes edited by Miss Hogarth; there are the volumes of letters to Beard, Lemon, the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Wilkie Collins, etc. All are brought into this complete collection—complete, that is to say, as far as is known now, but letters are continually turning up even yet. But ever so many previously unpublished letters are here. The correspondence with Cruikshank, for instance, which once and for ever answers his lying claim in respect of *Oliver Twist*; the remarkable series of letters to Overs; while we are given several letters to Forster that have not seen the light before.

I shall have opportunity of going a little more into detail when Vols. 2 and 3 appear. For the present I end with a further expression of thanks to editor and publisher.

FROM RECENT BOOKS

By LOUIS B. FREWER, M.A.
(Bodleian Library)

MORE DICKENSIAN ENGLAND

"His [the toll-keeper's] customers were at first such heavy old coaches as would make the journey, armed and prepared for all sorts of adventures by the way, of the type immortalised by Dickens in *The Tale of Two Cities*, in which the blunderbuss of the guard kept Mr. Cruncher at a distance until his *bona-fides* was established.

"Its coachman has been immortalised for all time by Dickens in the portly figure of Mr. Weller the elder, who represents its final and finest phase, when for over a decade it held its own against the developing railway.

"However, there was a less spectacular, more local type of traffic which clung to many a side and even some main roads, for which railways could never spread enough, and for which the stations were never accessible. It can be seen clearly enough in Dickens' Tom Smart, the Bagman, a type who took to the rail only very gradually and became the commercial gentleman. The grim reality of his journey across Marlborough Downs in 'the little neck-or-nothing sort of gig, with a clay-coloured body and red wheels, and the vixenish ill-tempered fast-going mare, that looked like a cross between a butcher's horse and a two-penny post-office pony,' is worth re-reading. The wind howled, the rain was driven down Tom Smart's and the mare's ears, 'its cold damp breath into their very bones.' The whole conveyance, mare, gig and occupant were nearly blown away, but it seems to have won its way through. Here Dickens was not indulging in the exaggeration that he is so often charged with. In his early reporting days he had travelled the roads in some such vehicle as that which he subsequently lent Tom Smart, with a flickering candle clipped to the frame of the shuddering hood, by the light of which with quill and bottle of ink he contrived to write the mass of work we know as the earlier books, while being driven at ten miles an hour from one job to another.

"The classic Eatanswill election was possibly a caricature, but such depend for their point on a certain parallel to truth . . . At Eatanswill, the band was used deliberately to drown the rhetoric of the opposing party, until, as we know, Horatio Fitzkin, of Fitzkin Lodge, asked his opponent, the Honourable Samuel Slumky, of Slumky Hall, if the band played by his consent. The question and answer nearly led to a duel. This, of course, is Dickens, but once more, the circumstantial records of the time show that, as usual, Dickens exaggerated, but not much."—"Old England," by R. H. Mottram. (Studio Ltd.)

* * * * *

STEPHEN LEACOCK AGAIN

"As we pass into the nineteenth century we seem to move from sun-flecked shadow into the open sun. For the modern world it is high noon when the century is well in, and with Charles Dickens the sun is at its very zenith.

". . . when Dickens made up his wonderful proper names, such as Mr. Vholes, Mrs. Gamp, Mr. Tulkinghorn, Mr. Weller, and a hundred

others, they are drawn from the under-sound and any connection with other words is either accidental, or by attraction, but not of necessity. Thus Vholes, the name of a rascally lawyer, if you like is *vampire* and *ghoul* but only because it *had* to be: what is Gamp—is it *gruesome* and *damp*?

"It was this rapid confusion of alternating tears and laughter which led the vociferous French critic, Jules Janin, to make (1842) his famous denunciation of the art of Charles Dickens—'a mass of childish inventions in which everything that is horrible alternates with everything that is simple: here pass, in a flood of tears, people so good that they are absolutely silly: further on, rushing round and blaspheming, are all sorts of robbers, crooks, thieves, and paupers, so repulsive that one cannot conceive how any society containing them can last for twenty-four hours. It is the most sickening mixture you can imagine of hot milk and sour beer, of fresh eggs and salt beef, rags and embroidered coats, gold sovereigns and penny pieces, roses and dandelions. They fight, they kiss and make it up, they swear at one another, they get drunk, they die of starvation. Do you like stale tobacco, garlic, the taste of fresh pork and the noise of a tin pan beaten against a cracked copper saucepan? Then try to read this last book of Dickens.'

"... the *Pickwick Papers*, especially in the earlier chapters, contain a good deal of the humour of discomfiture apart from the question of the Nimrod idea of awkwardness at sport. An excellent example is found in the scene where Mr. Pickwick and his friends get mixed up in the tumult and parade of a military review at Chatham.

"But Mr. Pickwick, what is he? An English gentleman? No, except for Miss Anita Loos to whom all men are gentlemen. Pickwick is a gentleman, of course, but that's not the point. Is he the picture of a tradesman? No. A typical Englishman? No, a typical nothing; he's just Mr. Pickwick. By consummate art, or happy accident Mr. Pickwick's age is left in the twilight . . . every reader sees his own Pickwick. To a boy in his teens Mr. Pickwick is about forty-five, for a man in his thirties Mr. Pickwick is, say, fifty, and for a man of forty-five Mr. Pickwick is probably about sixty-five. I imagine that for an old man of eighty Pickwick would be about a hundred and ten.

"In the matter of the indefiniteness of Pickwick's age, Dickens's instinct was right. Mr. Pickwick had to be just passing from middle age to old age, certainly not old and certainly not young. There lies the breeding ground, or shall we say the feeding ground, of the true hero of humorous fiction; a man elderly, but not old; rotund but not fat; heavy but not infirm. "Humour and Humanity," by Stephen Leacock. (Butterworth.)

* * * * *

"To think of Dickens is to think of Ruskin. They are the two great masters of the Victorian art of verbal description: so great that, at its best, their descriptive prose attains an illusionist quality: to recall a passage is almost the equivalent of recalling a scene actually observed.' —"Daylight and Champaign," by G. M. Young. (Cape.)

* * * * *

AN ECHO OF *NICKLEBY*

"From this one learns that George Brown the elder was a preacher as well as a thinker, and that he could claim descent through his grandmother from Bishop Ridley, who was burned at the stake in the reign

of Queen Mary. He was practising as a solicitor in Barnard Castle when Dickens wrote his *Nicholas Nickleby* and pilloried the Yorkshire schoolmasters in the person of Wackford Squeers, Esquire, the original of which had a school not far away. When Newman Noggs in his note to Nicholas Nickleby added a postscript to say that there was 'good ale at the King's Head,' Dickens himself was giving that hostelry in Barnard Castle one of the biggest advertisements possible, for he had stayed at the 'King's Head' when studying Yorkshire schools; and George Brown the younger always pictured him at Barnard Castle when he thought of *Nicholas Nickleby*. So in *Master Humphrey's Clock* the original shop was kept by a watchmaker named Humphrey in the same street: and the clock which acted as a sign had a special lighting mechanism which appealed to small boys like George Brown. But his father, the solicitor, was actually consulted by the schoolmaster whom Dickens had so cruelly lampooned. He had one eye, and was immediately picked out as Wackford Squeers; but, in fact, he was the best rather than the worst of his class. George Brown the elder, however, was so convinced of the futility of attacking Dickens that he advised against the issue of a writ. The whole story is full of interest, but the incident is only mentioned here to show that the father of George Brown was a man of standing in Barnard Castle."—"George Brown and the Pacific," by C. B. Fletcher. (Royal Australian Historical Society's Journal and Proceedings, Vol. 7, 1921.)*

DR. DUFFIELD'S DROOD COLLECTION

The Library of The Dickens House has recently been enriched by the gift by Dr. Howard Duffield of his unique collection relating to *The Mystery of Edwin Drood.*

Almost a life's work has been put into making this collection, and Mr. Duffield has realised that the only proper place for it is the one Library in the world solely devoted to Dickens. The Trustees confidently look forward to other Dickens collectors following the lead of the highly esteemed President Emeritus of the New York Branch. In the next number of *The Dickensian* we hope to publish an account in some detail of this most welcome gift.

DICKENS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Mr. William Crosby Bennett, of Hollywood, has been particularly busy of late lecturing throughout Southern California on Dickens. All his lectures are different in subject, and the one he gave to the Los Angeles Branch in March last was his fifteenth. He informs us that the attendances average 300. With such enthusiasm we can well understand why the Fellowship is so strong in Southern California.

* The Rev. Geo. Brown, D.D., was, according to the "Australian biographical dictionary," a "notable Methodist missionary in the South Seas for nearly half a century," born at Barnard Castle, Durham, 7 Dec., 1835.

EDINBURGH. MRS. PEARSON CALLUM

Mrs. Pearson Callum, who since 1924, has been Hon. Secretary of the Edinburgh Branch, intimated her desire to be relieved of office at the Annual Meeting in April. The resignation was accepted with the greatest regret, but no one could dispute that Mrs. Pearson Callum had more than earned a rest. While she put it that advancing years made the appointment of a younger person desirable there is no evidence of any description that time has dealt otherwise than kindly and leniently with her.

Tributes were paid to the arduous work she had undertaken and discharged with so much acceptance over the long period of 14 years and how much the branch is indebted to her for the place it holds among the literary and social societies of the city.

Mrs. Pearson Callum has been appointed one of the Vice-Presidents of the branch which thus retains her services, and all trust that she may be long spared to take part in guiding the destinies of the branch.

W. A. A. C.

MR. M. L. PARRISH'S COLLECTION ON EXHIBITION

We have received a copy of the interesting catalogue of Dickens's writings, compiled from Mr. M. L. Parrish's collection at Dormy House, Pine Valley, N.Y., on the occasion of their recent exhibition at the Library Company of Philadelphia.

This "check-list," although not complete, is a comprehensive one, and indicates that Dickens holds a place of honour in Mr. Parrish's great Victorian library.

The following items may be noted as being of special interest and rarity :—*The Library of Fiction* (1836) in the original parts ; *Watkins Tottle* and other sketches (1836) ; *The Strange Gentleman* (1837), with the etched frontispiece ; a *Prime Pickwick* in parts ; *Oliver Twist*, Philadelphia, 1837 : all the known variants of the trial issues of *A Christmas Carol* ; *The Chimes*, Harper and Brothers, 1845, first American edition ; *The Battle of Life* (1848), first issue of first edition.

A. S.

THE BOOK FOR THE SEASON

At the Portsmouth Conference in 1937 it was decided by a unanimous vote that *Nicholas Nickleby* should be the book for special study during the season which commences this autumn. For many years now the book for the season has been fixed more than a year in advance in order that all branches might have sufficient notice to enable them to include it in their arrangements. The previous year by the same unanimous vote *Oliver Twist* was chosen for the year we are now ending. It is surprising to find that there are many branches who have chosen some other book rather than the one agreed to at the Conference ; but more surprising still to find that among the offenders are branches whose delegates voted for the book without raising any objection ! We refuse to describe the situation as "Pickwickian." It surely cannot be apathy ! What then *is* the reason ?

DICKENSIANA OF THE QUARTER

BOOKS

Janus Weathercock, by Jonathan Curling. Illustrated. Nelson (Ch. VII, "As Dickens Saw Him," pp. 355-366). 12s. 6d.

Alicia or *The Magic Fishbone*. Music by Thomas F. Dunhill. An operetta for treble voices. Edward Arnold and Co. 3s.

NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES

"Little Nell's Journey." Two letters. *Birmingham Post*, 1st February.

"The Birth of Dotheboys Hall," by R. B. Wyatt. *Yorkshire Post*, 31st January.

"Dickens's Memorable Visit to Yorkshire," by Arthur Sharp. *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, 29th January.

"A Dickens Centenary." *Nottingham Evening Post*, 29th January.

"Marriages in Dickens," by W.C.B. *Birmingham Post*, 4th February.

"How the Revelations of Dotheboys Hall Began." *Darlington Times*, 5th February.

"Manchester's Part in a Dickens Masterpiece," by David Young. *Manchester Evening Chronicle*, 3rd February.

"Dickens's Childhood: a Five-minute Biography," by Dale Carnegie. *Thomson's Weekly News*, 12th February.

"Birthday Reflections," by L. C. Manners. *Birmingham Daily Mail*, 7th February.

"Crook and Company in Old-time Fiction," by Christopher Yorke. *Yorkshire Evening Press*, 10th March.

"Little Nell's Journey." *Coventry Standard*, 19th March.

"Chuzzlewit and Dundee," by Lewis Spence. *Glasgow Bulletin*, 19th March.

"Tragic Story of a Bowes School," by Christopher Yorke. *Yorkshire Evening Press*, 2nd April.

"Dickens as Social Reformer." *Times Educational Supplement*, 2nd April.

"*Nicholas Nickleby* Centenary." *Cumberland and Westmoreland Herald*, 16th April.

"Is Dickens Old Fashioned?" by May Siede. *Chatham News*, 29th April.

"What Did Dickens Know of Cricket?" by Christopher Yorke. *Yorkshire Evening Press*, 30th April.

"Dickens and Germany," by E. M. Gummer. *Modern Language Review*, April.

* * * * *

SOME SUMMER PILGRIMAGES

Visitors to London during the summer are welcome to join any of the following excursions arranged by some of the Branches. Full particulars can be obtained from the respective Hon. Secretaries.

LONDON—

Saturday, June 25th. Pilgrimage to Knebworth and Rockingham Castle, conducted by Mr. S. J. Rust. By motor coach. Tickets, inclusive of luncheon, tea and all gratuities—Members 21/-, Friends, 25/-.

Saturday, July 16th. Afternoon Ramble to Chertsey, conducted by Mr. Arthur Jeffkins. Those wishing to join, please send card for particulars.

Saturday, September 17th. Afternoon Ramble from "The Angel to Fagin's Den," conducted by Mr. S. J. Rust. Meet Angel Station 2.30 p.m.

HACKNEY AND STOKE NEWINGTON—

June 11th. Visit to the Antient Society of Cogers, Cannon Street Hotel. Debate on the Events of the Week, opened by Mr. Tom Mann, 7.30 p.m.

July 9th (Afternoon). Visit to St. Albans in conjunction with the St. Pancras Branch.

ROCHESTER—

July 20th. Motor Coach trip to The Abbey Folk Park, New Barnet, *via* Blackheath, Southwark, Hampstead Heath. 7/-, not including Lunch.

August 7th. Motor Coach trip to Eltham Palace, through beautiful Kent. 4/6.

September 7th. Afternoon Tour by motor coach of the Hop country. 4/6.

A DICKENS OPERETTA*

THIS little operetta, the theme of which is taken from one of the stories in *Holiday Romance*, will we hope be welcome to schools as well as to branches of the Fellowship who desire to vary their dramatic activities with a musical show.

The children's choruses are in two parts only and can be sung in unison if desirable, while the solo parts can be allotted to older children or grown-ups. The libretto closely follows the tale and the lyrics are charmingly written with ingenious rhymes. The music, by Thomas F. Dunhill, Professor at the Royal College of Music, is scholarly and yet artless, the prettiest effects being attained with the simplest of means. The whole is very tuneful and often piquantly quaint and full of delicious humour. A word must be added as to the interpolated dances which are perfectly charming, especially the Dance of the Cooks, the Pavane and the Minuet. The time of performance is a little more than an hour.

T. W. H.

A CORRECTION

The date of the first publication of *The Loving Ballad of Lord Bateman* was 1839, and not 1841 as stated in error on page 100 of the last number.

* Alicia or the Magic Fishbone; an operetta for Treble Voices based on a story by Charles Dickens. Libretto by Margaret Rose, music by Thomas F. Dunhill (Op. 88). London, Edward Arnold and Co. Price 3s.

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A LIVING "DICKENSIAN"

We do not take it to be any reflection on ourselves that the Winnipeg Branch should have issued number two of "a live Dickensian magazine"; but it was certainly a novel presentation of "the only magazine that comes alive" that was given at a recent meeting there. Mr. T. C. B. Boon (the Editor) explained that to save the expenses of printing and ink, the writers would appear in person. Miss Marion Smith gave "The Incompleat Dickensian"; Mr. Youell followed with "Dickens and the Stage"; Mr. Lavender with "More Dickensian Advertising," Prof. Cross with "A Traveller's Tale," and so on. Illustrations were provided by character sketches by the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Davidson. A novel idea well carried out.

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A COMPOSITE DICKENS PLAY IN RUSSIAN

We learn that a play entitled " In Old England " has just been produced at the Children's Theatre in Moscow, and received with much enthusiasm. It was founded chiefly on *David Copperfield*, with supplementary scenes from *Oliver Twist* and *Hard Times*. This is no new idea, for some years ago a similar play, based on the two first-named novels, was produced in Paris.

MONTREAL'S EXCELLENT RECORD

The Recording Secretary of the Montreal Branch, Mrs. S. LeBourveau, pointed out in her report to the final meeting of the Season that the membership stands at 394 and that the branch has assisted nine welfare organisations from the proceeds of Tiny Tim Night. Also that donations have been made to four other benevolent societies during the year, the Fellowship thereby maintaining the humanitarian spirit of Charles Dickens.

On April 5th the Executive and some of the members visited the Moore Home at Longue Pointe and provided an entertainment and supper for about two hundred old people under the chairmanship of Mrs. F. N. Stephen, with Mrs. Barrington in charge of refreshments, and Mrs. Aston in charge of the programme.

The Dickens Players' Club has done excellent work during the year, and the addresses and music at all the seven meetings have been of a high order.

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